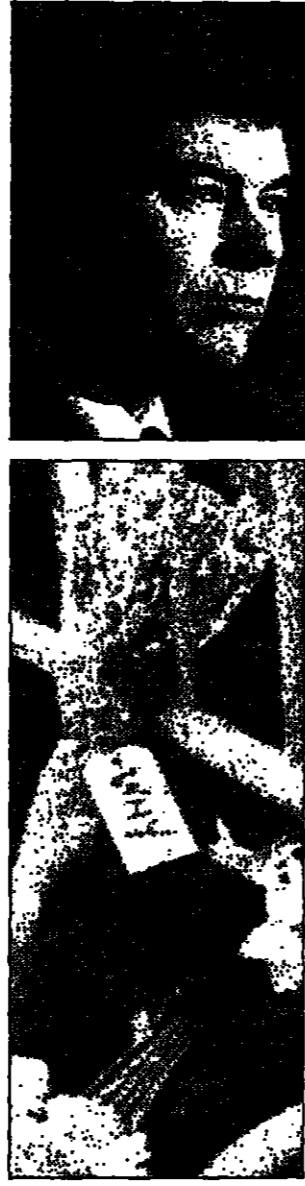




DUNBLANE: THE CULLEN REPORT

Warning signs on the route



On March 13, 16 children from one class (right) were murdered at Dunblane primary school, whose headmaster is Ron Taylor (top). Local people were stunned (left) and a posy of flowers at the scene poses an unanswerable question

Hamilton's boys' camps were 'like the Hitler youth'

Sarah Boseley

There were many warnings along the road to the tragedy in the Dunblane primary school gym that Thomas Hamilton was unstable and a potential danger to children. Most of them were ignored or brushed aside. A loner and a misfit all his adult life, Hamilton had a confused childhood. After his father left when he was 18 months old, he was brought up by his grandparents, believing his mother to be his sister. In his early 20s, Hamilton became a Boy Scout leader. Within a year, he had been dismissed after complaints about two weekend camps he conducted in Aviemore in 1974. The boys returned cold, wet and hungry, and had spent one night not, as prom-

ised, in a hostel but in the back of Hamilton's van. Brian Fairgreave, a retired surgeon and former scouting county commissioner for Stirlingshire, interviewed Hamilton after the complaints. He told Lord Cullen: "I formed the impression that he had a persecution complex, that he had delusions of grandeur, and I thought his actions were almost paranoid." He had written to Scottish scout headquarters warning: "As a doctor, and with my clinical acumen only, I have suspicions of his moral intentions towards boys." Hamilton made many abortive attempts to get back into the Scout movement — but he had been blacklisted. However, nothing prevented him from setting up his own private boys' clubs after school, with camps in the summer holidays. They were quasi-militar-

istic affairs, with great emphasis on physical exercise. The boys would drill, stripped to the waist, in all weather. George Robertson, the shadow Scottish secretary, who lives in Dunblane, withdrew his own son from one of them in 1983 after watching, unnoticed, what was going on. It was, he told the inquiry, "a bit like the Hitler youth". His "gut feeling" that there was something wrong led him to write to Michael Forsyth, the local MP and now Scottish Secretary. From November 1981, Hamilton hired school halls for 15 boys' clubs from local authorities across the Central, Forth and Lothian regions. He held a Grade 5 certificate from the British Amateur Gymnastics Association, which permitted him to coach under supervision, but most of the activity was football. Parents soon became anx-

ious. There was concern about the videos and photographs Hamilton took of boys posing in the black swimming trunks he provided while taking deep breaths. "The overriding impression [to parents] was that there was something unnatural. The boys did not seem to be enjoying themselves but appeared silent and even frightened," said the Cullen report. Hamilton claimed he was keeping the boys off the street and fit — he said he hated fat children and blamed parents for giving them junk food. In 1983, Central region decided to cancel Hamilton's lets. Hamilton protested to the local ombudsman that the decision was based on malicious gossip and obtained 30 letters of support from parents. He won his case. A summer camp run by Hamilton on Inchmochrum Island in Loch Lomond was visited

by police in July 1988, after one boy had returned home unhappy. The 13 boys appeared cold and inadequately dressed, the sleeping bags were damp, but although some said they were homesick and Hamilton would not allow them to phone their parents, none wished to leave with the officers. The Procurator Fiscal investigated stories from the boys that Hamilton had slapped them, but found their accounts contradictory. No action was taken, but the incident enraged Hamilton who began to deluge the police with complaints. Doreen Hagger's son had attended the Inchmochrum camp. She accused Hamilton to his face of forcing boys to run around naked, spanking them, and making them rub suntan oil into his body. He threatened her, she said, with a gun.

So in May 1989, she and a friend, Janet Rilly, threw buckets of rubbish, including suntan oil, over Hamilton at one of his boys' clubs in Lillithgow, hoping to be arrested so that they could tell their story in court. They were not charged, but the incident led to Lothian council closing the club. Complaints about another summer camp, in Mullaroch Bay, Loch Lomond, in July 1991 led to an investigation by Detective Sergeant Paul Hughes — now a chief inspector — the officer in charge of child protection. He was surprised to find the man had a firearms certificate. In a memo to his superior officer, he wrote: "I am firmly of the opinion that Hamilton is an unsavoury character and, making them rub suntan oil into his body, I would contend that Hamilton will be a risk to children continued on page 3

The report and the issues

'No action' officer resigns



Police: Lack of skill

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

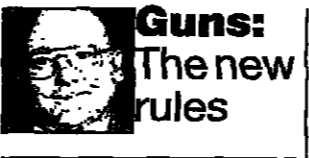
The police officer who authorised Thomas Hamilton's firearms certificate resigned yesterday from his post as Assistant Inspector of Constabulary. Douglas McMurdo, aged 56, who was Deputy Chief Constable of Central Scotland police when Hamilton was passed a fit to hold a licence, announced his resignation at Lothian and Borders police headquarters in Edinburgh. In doing so, he accepted responsibility for the role of the police in their dealings with Hamilton over nearly 20 years. They have been criticised for not acting more firmly in seeking to deny Hamilton his licence. Yesterday Mr McMurdo

said: "In my dealings with Thomas Hamilton, whether it was with regard to his complaints against the police or the licensing of his firearms, I tried to do what I felt was right and within the law. "I firmly believed at the time and still do now that the decisions I took were the only ones open to me. Nevertheless, I have to accept the conclusions reached by Lord Cullen. In the circumstances I do not believe I can continue as Assistant Inspector of Constabulary." The inquiry had heard that Hamilton was given authority on February 14, 1977, to acquire a .22 target pistol and on 12 subsequent occasions over the next 18 years had his certificate renewed or varied. The involvement of the police in assessing whether Hamilton should be granted a certificate was highlighted by an incident in 1988 when he took two handguns and a semi-automatic pistol to the home of a family in Lillithgow to show to some

members who had expressed an interest in guns. This was reported to police in Stirling on May 29, 1988. Sergeant Edward McGrane of Lothian and Borders police, took a statement from the family and sent a report to Mr McMurdo. Sgt McGrane said in evidence to the inquiry that he did not think Hamilton's behaviour was normal and that he had an impression that the family had "not been at ease". He did not pass on this impression in his report. Mr McMurdo said that he took no action because Hamilton's visit had been "at the instigation" of the family and that there had been no ammunition. With hindsight, he accepted that a warning could have been sent. Detective Sergeant Paul Hughes sent a report expressing major suspicions about Hamilton, describing him as "a scheming, devious and deceitful individual who is not to be trusted". Mr McMurdo studied the report and marked it "no

action". He told the inquiry that Det Sgt Hughes's remarks were based on "a gut feeling" rather than hard evidence, and that Hamilton would have been entitled to appeal to a sheriff if his gun certificate had been withdrawn. He was also shown to be involved in considerable correspondence about Thomas Hamilton during the period 1988-92 because Hamilton complained, without evidence, about "undesirable" links between Central Scotland police and the Scouts. In February 1992, Hamilton's certificate renewal was signed by Chief Superintendent John Adamson in the absence of Mr McMurdo. In 1995, Detective Constable Anne Anderson visited Hamilton's home and had a "strange feeling" about him but was told that nothing could be done. The Cullen report concluded that "the evidence (from the police) provided a disturbing picture of the operation of the decision-making process."

160,000 weapons to be melted down



Guns: The new rules

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

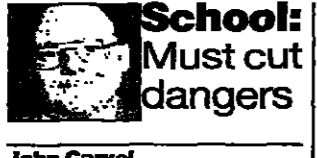
The ban on ownership of higher calibre handguns, such as were used by Thomas Hamilton, means that 160,000 weapons are now liable to be melted down at the foundry. A further 40,000 lower calibre guns will only be legal to own if they are kept in gun clubs "under conditions of the most stringent security". Compensation totalling £24 million will be paid to the owners affected based either on the individual market value of their guns or a flat rate fee when they are surrendered to the police. When the legislation comes into effect after Christmas a date will be set for the higher calibre guns, average value

£150, to be surrendered to the police. Those who fail to hand their guns once they become illegal could face prison sentences of up to 10 years. No compensation will be paid for ammunition. Owners of the smaller .22 calibre rimfire target pistols will initially have to hand in their guns to the police, while the 2,000 gun clubs bring their security standards up to the new stringent levels. Very few would qualify at present. The measures will include reinforced walls to ensure that thieves cannot break in, safes to store the weapons, burglar alarms linked directly to the police, and metal detectors to control access. Once a suitable club is available the guns will be personally stored there. If the owners cannot find one, their guns, their weapons will be destroyed. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, described these as "the minimum conditions for the continuation of handgun shooting in Britain". It is ex-

pected that some gun clubs will close because they will never achieve an adequate level of security. The Government is considering some exemptions, such as for vets who have to use larger handguns to shoot horses on racecourses and in the humane destruction of other animals, and to allow expanding ammunition only for deer hunting. Mr Howard insisted that the smaller calibre handguns represented a different case because they were four to six times less powerful than those above .22. The smaller guns were only intended for target shooting and were used in Olympic sports. For handgun owners who will continue to use the smaller pistols, there will be a more stringent licensing system, although no shooters will have to get a new firearms certificate until their current five-year ones expire. The police are to be given stronger powers to revoke existing certificates including "there is no longer a good

reason" for owning a gun. Other measures include making it illegal to sell a gun without notifying police and a ban on mail order sales of guns to anyone other than licensed dealers. The package of measures proposed by Mr Howard yesterday ignores nearly all Lord Cullen's main recommendations on gun control. The judge stopped far short of banning any kind of handgun. Instead, he put forward two suggestions to disable multi-shot pistols and revolvers of any calibre while stored. His first suggestion was that key components of a gun stored at home should be kept separately at a secure gun club. His second was that a gun club official should fit a locked "barrel block" to multi-shot handguns stored at home so it could not be used if it were stolen. Lord Cullen said that only if these two options were not adopted, should a ban on home storage of guns be considered. The Government rejected both as impractical.

Safety 'without fortresses'



School: Must cut dangers

John Carvel Education Editor

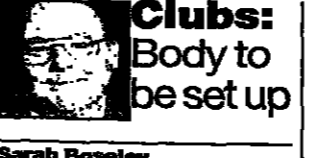
EVERY school should implement a customised plan to minimise the potential danger from intruders, but it would be unacceptable to strengthen defences to the point where places of learning were turned into fortresses, Lord Cullen said. His recommendations were similar to the proposals

accepted by the Government after a committee of teaching unions, police and other experts produced an analysis earlier this year of the lessons to be learned from the killing of Philip Lawrence, the west London headteacher. Schools should work out a safety strategy appropriate to their particular circumstances. In some, that might require panic buttons or telephones for staff in outlying buildings, personal alarms for teachers, or closed-circuit television. "It is understandable that in the aftermath of what happened at Dunblane primary school there should be calls for additional measures to protect the school population,

either in the form of physical alterations to schools or an increase in the extent to which access to them is supervised," Lord Cullen said. What would be appropriate to a country school of 700 pupils would be unlikely to be suitable for an isolated rural school. There might be special problems with converted buildings or establishments working on split sites. Some methods of opening locked doors might be appropriate for older children, but not the young or disabled. "Schools should be welcoming places... It would be unacceptable to carry measures to the point where schools were turned into fortresses.

At some point a balance has to be struck." A blanket approach to strengthening security could involve unnecessary or inappropriate expenditure, but piecemeal action by schools could risk problems being overlooked. There should therefore be a safety strategy and plan for each school. Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, said the report was weak on issues of school security. "A firm commitment needs to be made in principle for all schools to have well-defined boundaries, with one secure point of access," Mr De Gruchy said.

National accreditation proposed



Clubs: Body to be set up

Sarah Boseley

A NATIONAL body is to be set up to accredit clubs and voluntary organisations that offer leisure activities or care to children aged eight to 16, in the hope of reassuring parents that individuals like Thomas Hamilton will not have charge of their sons and daughters. The Government has accepted Lord Cullen's recom-

mendation that there is a need for all the information available about those who work privately with children to be pooled nationally. However, in his report, Lord Cullen rules out the compulsory vetting of staff, and suggests that accreditation for children's clubs and organisations should be voluntary. "Parents sometimes have to take a great deal on trust," the report says. "It is reasonable that they should be assured that the clubs or groups which their children attend have shown that they provide an adequate degree of protection against abuse. The children's safety is paramount." At present, Lord Cullen says, "there is nothing to prevent an

individual declaring himself or herself a youth leader, renting premises and starting a youth club or some other similar kind of activity for children over eight years of age." Persistent complaints about the sports clubs Thomas Hamilton was running for young boys did nothing to prevent him opening new ones. The fact that he had been blacklisted by the Boy Scouts, who dismissed him after just a year, was not passed on. Lord Cullen points out that a very large number of adults work on a voluntary basis with children in Scotland, they amount to between 70,000 and 100,000 people. Most voluntary organisa-

tions for children under eight have to be registered and inspected by local authorities under the Children's Act 1989, and a criminal record check may be made. There are already government proposals to allow voluntary organisations dealing with older children to check the criminal records of staff. But such checks would not have picked up the doubts about Hamilton, who had no convictions. The new national body would collect other information that might reflect on the suitability of any person to work with children, Lord Cullen says. It would draw up guidelines on recruitment of staff and monitor bodies it had accredited.

DUNBLANE: THE CULLEN REPORT

to horror went unheeded



Lynn McMaster, whose daughter died in the massacre, with her five-month-old son in Dunblane yesterday, and (right) senior policeman Douglas McMurdo, who resigned following the Cullen report. PHOTOGRAPHS: MURDO MACLEOD (left), STEWART ATTWOOD

continued from page 2
whenever he has access to them and he appears to me to be an unsuitable person to possess a firearms certificate... It is my opinion that he is a devious and deceitful individual who is not to be trusted." The memo was stamped by his superior "No action", because Hamilton had not been convicted of any crime.

sense serve as a warning. If the kind of circumstances as described are allowed to continue... I fear that a tragedy to a child or children is almost waiting to happen. Word got around, and boys began to ebb away from Hamilton's clubs. Hamilton wrote letter after letter of complaint to parents, to the Scottish Secretary, and even to the Queen.

out apparent reason. Yet prior to 1996, he shot only three or four times a year... There seems no obvious reason why he chose March 13, except that it was a Wednesday, the day Primary One had gym after assembly. The first person to see Hamilton near the school was Audrey McMillan, who noticed him driving a white van slowly at about 9.28am. It had parked beside a telegraph pole inside the school grounds.

week before he embarked on his own orgy of killing. Hamilton strode into the school, armed with two Smith and Wesson self-loading pistols, two .357 Smith and Wesson revolvers, and 743 bullets. He went straight for the gym. Mary Blake heard a noise and she looked up to see "a

dark figure" framed in the doorway. "He started firing," she said in her statement to the inquiry. "The children were screaming. I am not sure if he had a gun in both hands. I was hit and I realised something terrible was happening. He was pointing the gun all around and shooting." Ushering some children in front of her, she stumbled to the storage alcove. Then, with four wounded children and Eileen Harrild, the PE teacher who had also been shot, she hid for what seemed an age trying to quieten the children. "The children cowered on the floor, lying helplessly in pools of blood, hearing the screams and moans of their classmates in the gym and waiting for the end or for help," said Lord Cullen in his report.

Hamilton walked up one side of the gym, firing as he went, and then moved to the centre, where he "walked in a semi-circle systematically firing 16 shots at a group of children who had either been disabled by the firing or who had been thrown to the floor," says the report. "He stood over them and fired at point blank range." From a fire door, he aimed nine shots into a temporary classroom outside, but the teacher had fortunately told the children to get down on the floor. In all, he fired 105 bullets in three to four minutes, killing 15 children and Mrs Mayor and wounding many more. Another child died on arrival at hospital.

Police memo spoke of an unstable and unsavoury personality



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Compensation for surrendered guns estimated to cost £24m

How many people hold handgun licences now?
Around 57,000.

How many handguns are there in Britain?
Around 200,490 legally held handguns, of which around 20 per cent are .22s.

What will you be allowed to keep at home under the ban?
If you own a valid firearm certificate you will still be able to keep a shotgun or rifle in the home.

How much do handguns cost?
Top of the range target pistols retail for £2,500 and upwards. A good .22 target pistol is around £800.

How much compensation will be paid?
Latest estimate is £24 million, with £150 per weapon being paid for 160,000 recovered weapons. Members of shooting organisations were talking up the likely cost prior to the conclusion of the Cullen inquiry.

The Shooters' Rights Association claimed that total compensation for all handguns, accessories, safes, etc, and for the closure of all related businesses could cost as much as £1 billion.

How many illegally held weapons are there?
Impossible to say. An estimate of between one million and four million is most common and backed by any facts or real research. There were 14,755 offences committed with firearms in 1994, which would seem to indicate that the vast majority of the esti-

mated illegally held firearms, if they exist, are not used for criminal purposes. Illegal guns can be hired by the day and extra is charged if the weapon is used.

What Acts control firearms at present?
The Firearms Act, 1968, consolidated and repealed all previous legislation. The 1968 Firearms (Amendment) Act, in the wake of the Hungerford massacre, banned self-loading rifles and semi-automatic or pump-action shotguns from private hands.

Will the change of law mean that gun owners go underground?
There is a risk that some gun owners will feel so aggrieved that they seek to retain weapons illegally but few are likely to do so. They are already identified by their licence ownership and thus known to police.

Yesterday Alan Drew, from Borough Green, Kent, a former military policeman, was at Maidstone crown court jailed for two years for illegal possession of two handguns and more than 3,000 rounds of ammunition.

The judge told him: "The message has got to go out that for anybody to possess weapons of this kind without a firearms certificate is a very serious offence, which... will inevitably attract a sentence of imprisonment."

Maximum sentence for illegal possession of a pistol is currently five years, for other firearms 10 years.

How many gun clubs are there?
There are 2,118 "approved" clubs in Great Britain. Ap-

proved means a club is registered with the Home Office but people with firearms certificates can legally build a range and use it as a club.

Many of the clubs were formed after 1906 when the government encouraged people to take up shooting in the wake of the Boer War because the nation's general ignorance of firearms had been exposed. Many of the early clubs were workplace-based.

How are the weapons stored?
Currently in an armory with a trip lock door and alarm is the recommended way, with individually keyed safes inside the armory.

The new requirements are much more stringent and many of the existing clubs would have to spend heavily to abide by them.

In future, all clubs will be licensed by either the Home Secretary or the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Clubs will have to install reinforced walls, approved safes, metal detectors to stop guns being removed illegally, perimeter fences and burglar alarms linked directly to police stations.

Owners of 22 pistols cannot find a club they will have to lodge their weapons temporarily with police. If they are unable to find a permanent home, the guns will be destroyed.

Will the clubs survive?
John Hoare, secretary of the National Small-Bore Rifle Association, believes that the vast majority will now close. Other shooters agree that the changes will "decimate" clubs, either because people will not want to continue

shooting under the changed rules or because of the costs involved in changing and reinforcing the clubs.

Will gun shops go out of business?
Some already have. There are 2,470 dealers in the country employing a total of around 10,000 people.

Since Dunblane and the setting up of the Cullen inquiry, sales have dropped dramatically in anticipation of at least a partial ban. Gunsmiths who manufacture parts and carry out repairs will also be out of work.

Can .22s do as much damage as other higher calibre handguns?
The Police Federation say that the .22 is "just as capable of killing as a larger calibre weapon." A shot from a .22 could kill at up to 100 yards and travel for nearly a mile. But higher calibre weapons are capable of inflicting greater damage than lower calibre weapons.

Does this mean the effective end of shooting as a sport in Britain?
No, but it would have a major effect on it. Some internationally recognised target shooting competitions, including the Olympic Games, are already restricted to 22 inch calibre pistols.

But the vast majority, including Commonwealth Games, are for pistols of up to .38 calibre.

The British Shooting Sports Council claim the handgun disciplines in the Olympics are only a very small part of the sport.

Duncan Campbell

SNOWDROP CAMPAIGN

Compromise unacceptable, so we fight on, vow parents

PARENTS bereaved by the Dunblane massacre vowed yesterday to continue to campaign for a complete ban on handguns.

At a tense and emotional news conference, they dismissed both Lord Cullen's report and the Government's response to it as unacceptable compromises.

The families said in a statement: "This is a compromise. It will result in the deaths of more innocent people. It is not acceptable to us. It should not be acceptable to the people of this country."

Mick North, whose daughter, Sophie, was murdered at the school with 15 other pupils, complained that Lord Cullen had "missed the bigger picture".

In a further blow to the Government, the chief organisers of the Snowdrop Petition warned they will now begin discussion with the Labour Party, an alliance that could have implications for the general election.

Ann Pearston again hinted she might stand against the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, in his vulnerable Stirling seat.

The bereaved families' rebuff will embarrass John Major and perhaps upset members of the wider Dunblane community, which has been hoping that their town could be allowed to drop out of the headlines. The publicity of the past few months has frightened away long-stay tourists and attracted an unwelcome influx of sensation-seeking day trippers.

Mrs Pearston, a 40-year-



At the Safari gun club in Chingford, Essex, Richard Law fires a Smith and Wesson Magnum. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

THE SHOOTERS

Angry gun clubs face closure 'for sake of political point'

THE weekly practice session of the South Downs Rifle and Pistol Club last night was more like a wake.

"We shall probably have to pack in because we don't shoot with the smaller pistols," club secretary Christopher Reader said. "In any case, there's nowhere to store 22 pistols here: it's damp and it sometimes floods."

For years, the 63 members of the club have been meeting at the range below Brighton promenade: harmless, law-abiding men and women who regard shooting simply as a sport, according to Mr Reader.

Now his 45 Smith and Wesson revolver is either heading for the scrap heap or the workshop to be de-activated by a gunsmith.

"This is my sport, my hobby; it has given me end-

less pleasure and led to many friendships; and now everything has gone," said Mr Reader, a gun enthusiast for 25 years.

"For a political point the Government is destroying a sport which millions enjoy, yet they will not make a noticeable difference to public safety with these measures."

He believes weapons will find their way from law-abiding people to criminals. Moves to store the smallest 22 weapons in central compounds were not only impracticable but potentially more dangerous because they could become "terrorist targets."

Richard Law, secretary of the Shooters' Rights Association, could not contain his anger. "This is the behaviour of a Third World dictatorship rather than a Western democracy," he thundered. "The plans are not practical or relevant."

Mr Law runs the association from his farmhouse at Llanfrynach near Carmarthen in south-west Wales, where he operates as a gun dealer and organises shooting courses at a range attached to his property.

He says he is still awaiting compensation from the Home Office for the confiscation of a weapon held legally by his wife after the Hungerford massacre in 1987, when self-loading rifles were banned.

Alex Boyd, secretary of Callander Rifle and Pistol Club, in Perthshire, who refused Thomas Hamilton membership six weeks before the Dunblane massacre, said he would mount a legal challenge to the Government's proposal, and was prepared to take the case to Europe.

"Picking on the gun clubs is the easy way out. Blame us and everyone's happy — well it is not good enough. We are not going to let them get away with it," Mr Boyd said.

Shooters at the National Rifle Association's headquarters in Bisley, Surrey, were feeling "sad and helpless", according to the association's chief executive Colin Cheshire.

"All the shooters have been ringing up this morning saying 'What are we going to do?'"

Peter Hetherington

Thursday October 17 1996
out

melted do

proposed



Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall pose together in happier times. But the model is said to be enraged by her husband's inveterate womanising and is seeking a divorce

Jagger and Hall prepare to split

Alex Bellos on rock's premier couple

SPECULATION grew yesterday that Mick and Jerry would be the latest celebrity couple to join Charles and Di and Bob and Paula in untying the knot in 1996.

In a manner fitting her position as half of rock's premier couple, Jerry Hall has contacted the Princess of Wales's divorce lawyer, Anthony Julius.

He said: "I have instructions from my client that I should make no comment in connection with this inquiry," which was widely interpreted as meaning she would imminently start proceedings against Mick Jagger, her husband of six years.

Ms Hall, aged 40, and mother of three of Jagger's children, has always been aware of her husband's philandering but is said to have snapped after he was recently spotted with a number of women, including the actress Uma Thurman. It is also not the first time the Texan-born model has reportedly threatened divorce. Four years ago she forgave him for his much-publicised affair with Italian supermodel Carla Bruni, aged 28, on condition he keep his flings discreet.

The 53-year-old Rolling Stone is estimated to be among the 100 wealthiest people in Britain, with a \$110 million fortune and homes across the world. Ms Hall, who is a millionaire, could expect a seven-figure sum in any settlement.

But if cash was her objec-

tive she would be unlikely to divorce in this country, where she lives with the children. "It would be surprising if somebody in her position wanted to divorce in this country," said Mark Stephens, who recently represented Paula Yates in her custody battle with Bob Geldof.

"Normally we would see this happen in California, where he would have to give up 50 per cent of everything he owns. If it's in this country, she will get what is sufficient for her needs and the needs of the children."

The pair have been together for almost 20 years since Jagger "stole" her from then-boyfriend, Bryan Ferry. Jagger was married at the time to his first wife, Bianca Rosa Perez-Marcia.

Jagger and Ms Hall have had well publicised affairs since they met. The latest infidelities hit the press earlier this month when Jagger was reported to have been seen in a passionate embrace at a Los Angeles nightclub with Uma Thurman. Last week-end he was reported to have spent the night with Czech model Jana Rajlich, aged 28.

When they married, Ms Hall seemed to develop an almost proud acceptance that her chosen man was beyond control. "My theory is, the more you let 'em go, the more they come back," she once told an interviewer. It seems that even she now has limits.

Pass notes, G2, page 3.



Film star Uma Thurman, who is reported to have been seen in a passionate clinch with Jagger in a Los Angeles nightclub before he moved on to a night with a Czech model

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Gummer hits at Europe's 'CFC gangsters'

Paul Brown Environment Correspondent

WIDESPREAD smuggling of banned ozone-depleting chemicals by European "gangsters" must be stamped out, John Gummer, the Environment Secretary told a conference of Customs and police officers yesterday when he launched a campaign against environmental crimes.

Mr Gummer said the black market in CFCs threatened the international movement to cure ozone depletion. "People who smuggle this kind of contraband kill people, and threaten children's lives. They are in the same league as drug smugglers."

The chemical industry estimates that 10,000 tonnes of CFCs worth £100 million are on the black market in Europe. At least 10 per cent is thought to be used in Britain to keep old commercial fridges and air conditioning units functioning.

But yesterday Mr Gummer admitted that no consignment of CFCs had been stopped, nor a single gangster. He was tipped off about the problem by the US administration because the American smuggling racket was found to be fuelled by what he called "European gangsters".

Manufacture of CFCs was phased out in 1994 in Europe to stop further damage to the ozone layer, which acts as a shield to keep out ultra-violet light which causes skin cancer and eye damage. CFC use is supposed to be strictly limited to old stocks and recycling, but large quantities of new CFCs are circulating. Their source is a plant in Russia that should have been closed under the Montreal

Vapour trail

AFTER cocaine, seizures of CFCs account for most of the contraband passing through Miami, according to US Customs; Some 5,000 tonnes of CFCs, worth \$1 million on the black market, were seized by US customs in 1994;

In Europe 10,000 tonnes of contraband CFCs, mostly from Russia and valued at £10,000 a tonne, are being offered to industry on the black market;

No contraband CFCs have yet been detected by HM Customs, and no arrests have been made, although it is believed to be a £100 million business in Europe;

Manufacture of CFCs became illegal in Europe in 1994.

Protocol, the international agreement to phase out CFCs. However, this is attracting considerable foreign exchange for the beleaguered country.

Eileen Clauson, US assistant secretary of state for international environmental affairs, has criticised the European Union for allowing the illegal trade. But Mr Gummer said the UK should be praised because it was the first country in Europe to tackle the problem.

Duncan Brack from the Royal Institute of International Affairs told the conference that Customs officers needed help and training to be able to detect these illegal shipments. "At the moment there is little chance of being caught," he said.

Suddenly in Washington, in what had been basically a malarial swamp, a pseudo-Gothic castle rose up, and out of that emerged the Smithsonian.

OnLine G2 page 12

Pain easing settlements

The Princess of Wales received a settlement worth £17 million as a result of her split from Prince Charles. The couple divorced after 15 years of marriage.

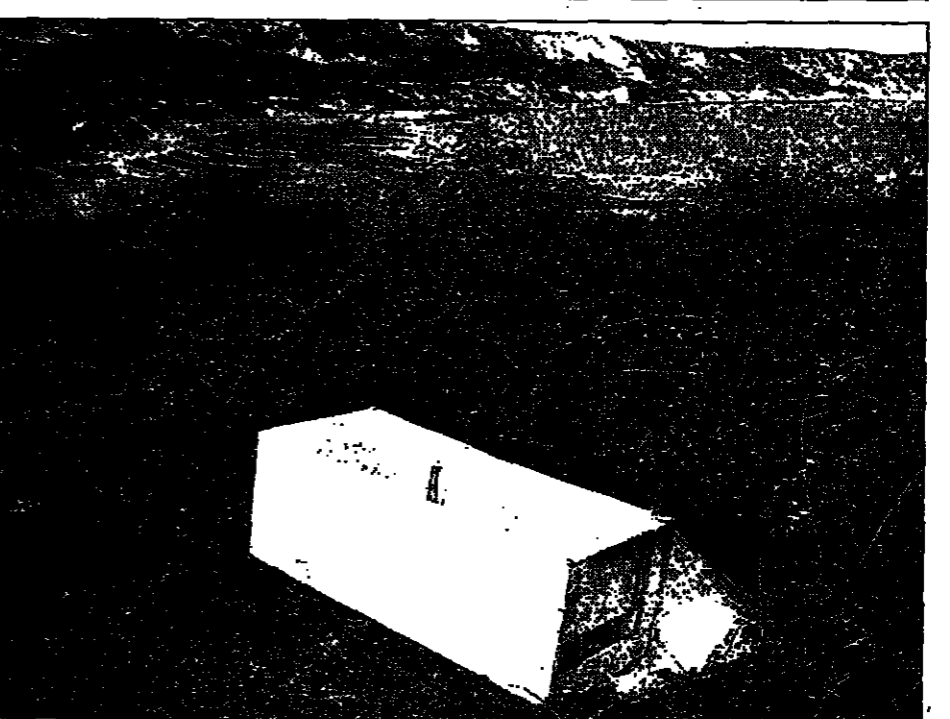
American singer and songwriter Neil Diamond recently agreed to hand his ex-wife Marcia £100 million, saying she was "worth every penny" as she was the mother of his youngest children and had stuck by him through thick and thin

Oscar winning film director and actor Kevin Costner was said to have paid his wife, Cindy, £50 million. Their 16 year marriage collapsed after he was romantically linked with a Hawaiian hula dancer while filming Waterworld.

American comedienne Roseanne Barr called her ex-husband Tom Arnold "a pig" when he insisted on a £33 million payout under a pre-nuptial agreement.

Elizabeth Taylor parted with £8 million when she divorced Larry Fortensky — so he would not tell his story of their life together.

The record is believed to be held by Soraya Knashoggi, a former telephonist, who was said to have received £500 million plus property from her billionaire ex-husband Adnan in a settlement in America in 1982.



Closest danger... A discarded fridge whose coolant 'threatens children's lives' through the release of CFCs, in which there is an estimated £10 million black market in Britain

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YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Stuart Millar on the evidence that led to lorry driver being convicted of murder



Bernard and Beatrice Figard, at a press conference following the verdict, above; Stuart Morgan, below, who was found guilty of her murder and sentenced to life imprisonment yesterday; and Miss Figard, right



'What you did to Celine has caused revulsion in the minds of all right-thinking people'

Champagne led to trucker who killed

STUART MORGAN'S white Mercedes lorry was a familiar sight in Bourne-mouth Road, Poole, Dorset. At weekends, when the 37-year-old owner-driver was not transporting loads around the country from the container terminal at Southampton, the lorry could be found parked in the forecourt of the petrol station across the road from his home. It was a friendly agreement which ultimately contributed to his life imprisonment yesterday at Worcester crown court for the murder of the French student Celine Figard last December. He was found guilty in a unanimous verdict by the jury of nine women and two men after four hours of deliberation. Mr Justice Latham told Morgan he had been convicted on the clearest evidence. "What you did to Celine has caused revulsion in the minds of all right-thinking people. I consider that you are a dangerous man and will so report to the Home Secretary."

Outside the court, Miss Figard's father, Bernard, spoke through an interpreter to thank the British public for their support. He was opposed to the death penalty, he said, but he hoped life would mean life in Morgan's case "because this type of monster is not capable of being cured". The vital link between Morgan's parking arrangements and his conviction came when he left the lorry on the garage forecourt last Christmas and gave some of the staff presents which included two bottles of rare vintage Champagne which he labelled "from Stuart". What the recipients did not know was that the bottles had been taken from the luggage of Miss Figard, whose raped and beaten body lay a short distance from them, on the lower bunk of Morgan's blood-spattered cab. The body would lie there for 10 days until he dumped it in a lay-by on the A449 near Worcester, where it was found in undergrowth by a motorist on December 29. Throughout this time, the prosecution said, Morgan kept a very cool head indeed. The champagne was the most important of a number of trails that led police to the stocky, bearded lorry driver after one of the biggest investigations seen in this country. Behind the docile domestic veneer, Morgan was a serial philanderer. As he said in court: "I am of the character where I flirt happily and playfully with women." Even Stuart Jones QC, defending, described him as a despicable character. He divorced his first wife, Catherine, with whom he had twin sons, in 1988 after a four-year affair with Glynnda, whom he married in 1991. Even after their son was born in 1985, Morgan saw other women. He had a seven-year relationship with Alison Fullbrook, of Wigan, who sold his illegal goods. He also had sex on several occasions with a female lorry driver, and, he claimed, frequently enjoyed casual sex with hitchhikers he picked up - like Celine Figard. The shy, popular acoun-

tancy student, aged 18, was on the final leg of a journey from her home near the Franco-Swiss border to spend Christmas at the hotel in Fordingbridge in the New Forest, where she had worked the previous summer to improve her English. Her second cousin, Jean-Marc Figard, a trainee manager at the hotel, had arranged the job for her. She had overcome public sector strikes in France to make it back for a holiday she had been planning from the moment she returned home after the first visit. RATHER than allowing her to hitchhike through France, her devout Catholic parents, Bernard and Martine, arranged for the son of a family friend to take her in his lorry through the Channel Tunnel. On the way they had stopped at the vineyard of Pascal Chretien, who presented Miss Figard with the two bottles of his 1983 vintage champagne. Another French driver took her from Ashford,

going to Salisbury remains unclear. Shortly after they left Chieveley, he pulled over and raped, beat and strangled his passenger, her hands probably bound with adhesive tape. He stored her body on the lower bunk before continuing to Southampton. It was, the prosecution said, "an act of calculated and unmitigated wickedness". For the next three days he drove considerable distances with the body behind him, then parked in the petrol station for Christmas. There is evidence that he intended to dismember the body before burying it, but in the early hours of December 29, his first opportunity after the break, he dumped it in the lay-by. For almost a month the hunt for the driver proved fruitless. More than 35,000 letters were sent to road hauliers asking for help, and officers began contacting each of the 7,500 owners of white Mercedes lorries. Morgan was among those paid a routine visit. At first he stuck to the story that he had not been anywhere near Chieveley on the day Miss Figard disappeared and later produced falsified tachograph records to back up the tale. But when he refused to undergo DNA analysis, and mobile phone records showed he had indeed been near Chieveley that day, his name became the first and only entry on the suspect list. W HEN two bottles of champagne the same as those given to Miss Figard turned up at the petrol station, police felt they had their man. On February 17 he was arrested, his lorry impounded and his home searched, but still he stuck to his story. The turning point came when an English driver whom Miss Figard had also approached at Chieveley picked Morgan out in an identity parade. At this point his web of elaborate and increasingly fantastic lies began to unravel. He admitted that he had picked Miss Figard up but said he had dropped her safely in Southampton. When DNA evidence showed he had had intercourse with her, he claimed it had been consensual, and that Miss Figard had

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The 'famous wives' club' gibe makes a serious point. Architects work in partnerships. Architects also seem to marry other architects, and in many cases the work of the female half of the team is subsumed under the name of the male half. Women, G2 page 4

Dole's road to nowhere

Death by TV
LEAD DAY
Bob Dole looks like Dr. Death when he delivers the Republicans' televised response to President Clinton's State of the Union address. He makes a poor lighting.

Winter woes
REALLY BAD DAY
Bob Dole loses the New Hampshire primary in ultra-right Howard Phillips Bushman, once again. Dole's best bid in 1996 and 1998. He has lost to Clinton in the past.

At last, the imagination
GOOD DAY
Dole looks up the Republican nomination by sweeping the South on Tuesday. On the ground, he is a disaster.

Where's Bob?
DARK DAYS
TV screens go blank as the Dole campaign runs out of cash. With all the money spent fighting the Republican nomination, he has no money left to run for President. He has to go back to the White House to find a job.

Farewell to Washington
SAD DAY
Senate veteran announces he will quit Capitol Hill to concentrate on running for President. He has to go back to the White House to find a job.

Outraged
AWFUL DAY
Dole tells Kentucky audience that cigarettes are not addictive, and are about as harmful as drinking milk. Critics say he's out of touch and in the job of the tobacco lobby. He is dressed as a cigarette.

Stagger panic
REALLY AWFUL DAY
Republicans panic over the prospects of their candidate. Conservative guru George Will says he doesn't think of a viable presidential campaign. The summer is filled with talk of a Champ Dole movement.

California descended
GOOD WEEK
Republicans meet for a non-fund-raising convention in San Diego. Henry Kissinger says he will not run for president and will not give a speech.

Time to turn back
STUNNING DAY
In a matter of hours, Dole announces the top Republican pick for president. He says he will not run for president and will not give a speech.

Last chance
LAST DAYS
Dole's campaign is in a state of collapse. He has lost the New Hampshire primary and is facing a long and difficult road ahead.

DOLE

JANUARY 1996 FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER

Dole team stuck on dead end trail

Martin Walker and Jonathan Freedland in Washington

BOB DOLE has had trouble with his staff ever since he sacked his two campaign chiefs in the 1988 primaries and left them stranded on a Florida runway as his plane took off.

This time round has not been much better. The Republican presidential candidate is on his third team of campaign advisers after two bruising purges.

Recently sacked aide Mike Murphy calls Mr Dole's Washington headquarters "the Kremlin" and relations inside are grim. Campaign manager Scott Reed erupted in fury last week against the vice-presidential candidate Jack Kemp for lacking aggression in the televised debates. Mr Kemp said he was

following Mr Dole's orders to treat Bill Clinton as "our opponent, not our enemy".

Slammed doors and glum silences have been the norm in the Dole campaign all year, with the brief exception of the San Diego convention. Much of this is due to the frustration of Republicans, who face a flawed President Clinton but seem unable to deploy an effective strategy against him.

The turnaround was meant to come when the Republicans met for their August convention. The week-long television show was rife with internal rifts were hidden — but none of it translated into momentum for Mr Dole.

That is because he was not the star of his show. He was upstaged by his wife, Elizabeth, whose Oprah Winfrey-style stroll into the audience with a microphone was a wow — matched only by the sparkling performance of retired general Colin Powell.

Mr Dole's speech was an anti-climax: well-written but poorly delivered and too much of a laundry-list to linger in the national memory.

The real trouble with the campaign is the candidate. Mr Dole's advisers have blundered but they have been advising an abysmal campaigner. On television he looks like an undertaker, on the stump he is awkward. His rhetoric consists of podium-pounding repetition, and he stumbles on applause lines.

He has made basic campaign errors. In New Hampshire he visited the Old Man Ale brewery as concern was mounting about his age. When panic gripped the Republican hierarchy, he scheduled a stop

at a New Jersey factory that makes life rafts.

In California he has been jinxed. He mistakenly relocated the LA Dodgers to Brooklyn — they left in 1957 — referred to San Diego as San Francisco, and gave picture editors a metaphor for his campaign when he fell off a platform in Chico.

Comedians still depict him as a snarling old man. When he attacks the president voters accuse him of being negative.

Mr Clinton's television adverts have been relentlessly negative, but his honey tones sugar the message. Many Republicans wonder whether any candidate could have done much better against Mr Clinton.

the master of politics as performance art.

Moreover, insiders see three structural reasons for the weakness of Mr Dole's campaign. First, the Republican Party was hurried on to the defensive by a public backlash against its shut-down of chunks of government in last winter's failed attempt to bully Mr Clinton into swallowing deep budget cuts.

Second, as the electoral season was just beginning in late 1995, all the political oxygen and much of the money was sucked away by the Republicans' long, vain wait for the reluctant Gen Powell.

The third reason was the bruising primary season. The publishing billionaire Steve Forbes spent \$30 million (about \$20 million) on television advertising that attacked mainly Mr Dole. Having lost New Hampshire to Pat Buchanan, and Arizona to Mr

Forbes, Mr Dole spent his entire war chest in winning the southern states and the Midwest primaries which secured him the nomination.

But with no money left, the Dole campaign deserted the airwaves from the end of April until mid-August. Meanwhile, Mr Clinton poured the \$55 million he did not need to spend in the primaries into stunnily optimistic adverts that drove up his ratings.

When the Republicans were spending money, half of it was to attack Mr Dole. When the Democrats spent, it was all on Mr Clinton. That sums up the dynamics of the election year and helps explain the double-figure lead the president has enjoyed for eight months. It also gives Dole an excuse, raising the question whether any Republican could have beaten the incumbent in a year of peace and prosperity.

Chinks in Clinton's armour

MR DOLE'S recent attack upon Mr Clinton's ethics distinguished between personal failings, which are not a target, and the abuse of office, which is seen as fair game.

Whitewater Mr Dole has in the past avoided this, because the investment took place long before Mr Clinton won the presidency, and Mr Dole has some financial-political embarrassments of his own.

Filegate The improper gathering of confidential FBI files on Republicans was dismissed by Mr Clinton as a bureaucratic mistake. Mr Dole described it as a sinister misuse of presidential power.

Travelgate The role of Hillary Clinton in the dismissal of White House travel staff looks to be legally perilous for the First Lady, who denies involvement. Mr Dole says an innocent man was railroaded. Dirty administration Mr Dole lists 30 former Clinton team members who have been jailed or forced out by scandal. Indonesia A fund-raising scandal involving \$4 million raised from Asian businessmen. This complex brew involves human rights in East Timor, a \$250,000 retainer and an Indonesian gardener who gave the campaign \$425,000. None of this looks illegal, but it smells fishy.

Convicted partners Mr Clinton's successor as Arkansas governor, Jim Guy Tucker, was convicted of fraud along with Mr Clinton's Whitewater partners James and Susan McDougal. Trust This adds up, says Mr Dole, to Imperil "the integrity of the presidency itself".

New generation of rebels prowl Nicaragua's hills

Poverty precludes an early end to contras, writes Phil Gunson in Matagalpa

COMANDANTE Toño gestured at the steep, wooded hills, recalling the war that officially ended six years ago.

"This is a city with natural defences," he said. "The Sandinistas always held the hill-top positions we never penetrated Matagalpa itself."

Even so, the former contra commander — real name Walter Calderon — was a big headache for the Sandinista army. He led the Jorge Salazar regional task force, the most effective fighting unit of the Nicaraguan Resistance the last of several names under which contras fought.

Later, Comandante Toño headed tactical operations for the contras, who with United States support became one of the biggest guerrilla armies in modern Latin America.

He took part in negotiations which eventually led to the 1990 peace accord and the demobilisation of 22,000 anti-Sandinista rebels. But even today — after numerous pacts and amnesties and a good deal more killing — an estimated 400-500 contras roam the hills of north Nicaragua.

Yesterday a group calling

itself the Andrés Castro United Front issued a statement threatening election workers and observers in the north. The army said the group comprised fewer than 25 former Sandinista soldiers. Virtually all previous ex-Sandinista groups have demobilised.

The government views them as bandits to be hunted down. The true situation is more complex.

"In reality, the rearmed groups (rearmados) are the authority in the northern border areas where they operate," said a foreign expert.

He said that in addition to groups of common criminals, at least 20 small bands led by former contras were operating along the border with Honduras.

They execute alleged criminals and issue communiqués accusing the government of Violeta Chamorro of collaborating with the Sandinistas and not keeping promises of land for demobilised contras.

The most disturbing trend is that while the leadership is composed of ex-contras, most of the rearmados are too young to have fought in the 1980s.

"The circumstances of life in this region make it much more attractive to go around with a gun and call yourself king of the mountain, rather than being just another starving peasant," the source said.

The deaths of several rear-

mado leaders, officially killed in clashes with the army, are widely attributed to a policy of selective assassination which Comandante Toño said was doomed to failure.

"We can't allow ourselves the luxury of having a zone of permanent conflict," he said; the only solution was to concentrate foreign aid money on this desperately poor area.

Enrique Bolaños, a private sector leader and running mate of rightwinger Arnaldo Alemán in Sunday's election, agrees. "There is no employment, so people use that as an excuse to become bandits."

With investment and police work, he said, an Alemán government would resolve the situation in six months.

Most of the Nicaraguan Resistance, now called the PRN party, supports Mr Alemán.

But in a surprise move last month, the Sandinista presidential candidate, Daniel Ortega, signed a pact with a breakaway faction claiming to represent 4,000 ex-contras.

The agreement went down badly with both bands of former adversaries.

Six years on, it seems the war can still not be laid to rest. But there are hopeful signs. Few on either side are interested in restarting the war, and Comandante Toño's position is more representative than that of the contras. "We must forget revenge," he said.



Uma Alexis tends her craft stall in Havana yesterday behind a plaque of Che Guevara. She is among thousands of self-employed in Cuba who are protesting against proposed taxes in 1993, has already delayed the taxes because of protests. PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MCCONNICO

News in brief

Mexican drug baron convicted

JUAN GARCIA ABREGO, the Mexican drug cartel leader, was convicted in Houston yesterday of masterminding the transport of tons of cocaine into the United States and laundering \$10.5 million (about £7 million) in drug profits.

García Abrego, aged 52, looked stern as the verdict was announced. He faces up to life in prison.

He was once on the FBI's "most wanted list". Prosecutors said that he was making \$2 billion a year before his capture in January.

He reportedly doled out bribes to Mexican officials to have them look the other way. Among García Abrego's alleged associates was Raúl Salinas, elder brother of the former president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

The verdict was followed by a property forfeiture hearing at which District Judge Ewing Werlein Jr instructed jurors to determine an amount to be seized by the government as coming from illegal drug profits. — AP, Houston.

French strike to hit airports

TRAFFIC into French airports and ports is expected to be hit today as up to 5 million public sector workers go on strike to demand job security and pay negotiations in the face of government cuts.

At the forefront of demonstrations will be defence industry workers, threatened with 50,000 job cuts over five years. Air traffic controllers and dockers are expected to support the strike.

Transport companies expect one in three local, long-distance and Paris Metro trains to run. The Eurostar is not expected to be affected. However, most schools and town halls will be closed and emergency services only will be guaranteed in hospitals. — Alex Duval Smith, Paris.

British paedophile jailed

A BRITON, Paul Thompson, has been jailed for two years for paedophile offences in Albania, involving immoral acts with two boys, after his appeal failed.

Thompson, aged 34, of Ashford, Kent, was arrested in Tirana after a visit to Durres. The two boys had accompanied him.

He is divorced with two children. He has a previous conviction for sexual misconduct with two children in Maline. He was jailed for 12 years but released after five years.

The father of one of the children had come to the Appeal Court to give a statement, but was not allowed to speak. After the hearing he said Thompson had taken a shower with the boys and had washed their hair with English shampoo, but had not interfered with them. — Joanna Robertson, Tirana.

US blocks trade inquiry

THE United States yesterday refused to set up a panel requested by the European Union to determine whether the Helms-Burton law on investment in Cuba fitted global free trade rules.

Both Gardner, US ambassador to the World Trade Organisation, appealed to the EU to reconsider its request, arguing that the case was a political question and not a trade issue.

But a neutral panel on the Helms-Burton dispute will be created automatically at the next regular meeting of the dispute settlement body scheduled for November 20, three weeks after the US presidential election. A member state may refuse only once to set up a panel. — Reuters, Geneva.

Smuggler's fine art foiled

A CUSTOMS officer at Barajas airport, Madrid, became suspicious when a woman travelling from Colombia, with a passport identifying her as a fine arts professor, did not know the difference between Gothic and Romanesque art.

She was jailed after police found in her suitcase 600g of cocaine, valued at 30 million pesetas (\$250,000), the newspaper El País reported. — AP, Madrid.

Within this vast book, a hodge-podge of theory, anecdote, prejudice and rhetoric, there is an interesting, small book struggling to get out.

Natasha Walter reads Nancy Friday

Books, G2 page 10

easyJet

Smart Class not Club Class

£35

easyJet

Amsterdam

Tough times put brake on Argentina's jet set

Federico Eves in Buenos Aires

PRESIDENT Carlos Saúl Menem advised Argentine parents at a drugs seminar "to make sure their children avoid bad company" yesterday. Until recently, two frequent visitors to the football star Diego Maradona and his manager Guillermo Coppola — the former a cocaine addict, the latter in jail for the past week on drug-dealing charges.

Mr Coppola, aged 49, used his mobile phone to invite 20 friends to his birthday behind bars on Saturday, and a tearful Maradona took him a colour television on Sunday. But the investigating judge, Hernán Bernasconi, put a stop to the privileges.

Times are tough for the bronzed jet set that has flourished since Mr Menem came

to power in 1989. Mr Coppola's arrest raises questions about what class of person the president lets, not just into Olivos, but into his cabinet.

Mr Coppola is a friend of Mr Menem's private secretary, Ramón Hernández. The president, who champions the death penalty for drug dealers, was persuaded by Mr Hernández and Mr Coppola to make Maradona head his "Sun Without Drugs" campaign last summer.

In May last year, Maradona and Mr Coppola were at the presidential palace for Mr Menem's re-election party.

Mr Menem's aides said they could recall meeting Mr Coppola at Olivos only "occasionally". But Mr Menem said: "Who in the world of sports can say they had no dealings with Coppola?"

Judge Bernasconi warns of more arrests. Maradona's brother-in-law, Gabriel "the Walrus" Esposito, and the for-

mer soccer international, Alberto "the Rabbit" Tarantini, went down for drugs the same day as Mr Coppola.

Mr Coppola has had brushes with the law — on drug charges and over the murder of a nightclub owner in 1994. But his arrest surprised those who assumed friends in high places could keep you out of jail.

The Peronist government must show that it is no longer the case, especially since Mr Menem, his popularity in the doldrums, announced an all-out campaign against corruption the night before Mr Coppola's arrest.

The opposition is seeking mileage out of Mr Coppola's links with Mr Menem. Carlos Alvarez, leader of the Frepaso coalition, called Mr Coppola "an emblem of an ostentatious, night-cubbing, fraudulent government that sees power as just an opportunity to enjoy itself".

EC risk single

UK victory deal to

MINIC

NO monthly bill

FREE connection

NO contracts

Nationwide cover

Relaxation of rules likely to cause alarm in Germany

EC risks split on single currency

John Palmer in Brussels

THE European Commission yesterday risked a damaging split with German monetary disciplinarians by signalling a readiness to waive the strict rules over European monetary union for countries in economic difficulty.

The Commission said economies facing a "severe" recession or huge problems may be allowed to exceed budget deficit limits outlined by the Maastricht treaty.

They would receive temporary exemption under the terms of a stability pact.

The EC's approach on the pact and its insistence that unemployment, investment and other economic factors be taken into account in monitoring the performance of the single currency economies will be welcomed by most European Union governments and Britain's Labour Party.

But it may cause alarm in Germany where there is concern that too many countries are pressing to join the single currency in 1998.

The EC set out its ideas in proposals to be put to the heads of government summit in Dublin in December. The Bundesbank and Bonn government have insisted on a precise definition of how serious a recession would have to be to justify the relaxation of rules. But after a three-hour debate yesterday the EC decided this should be left to the collective discretion of member governments.

Aware of German fears, the Commission president, Jacques Santer, underlined the disciplines included in the stability pact. "These give assurance that the Euro will be a credible and reliable project," he said in Brussels.

He said governments should work towards long-term budgetary balance and warned that they might have to pay non-interest bearing deposits of between 0.2 per cent and 0.5 per cent of national production if their budget deficit exceeded 3 per cent in any year.

If the offending member state continued to defy efforts to bring it back into line, the deposits could then become permanent fines. Once it is clear that a country risks having "an excessive deficit" it

will have about 10 months to take corrective action.

The EC believes this tough approach should be balanced by the recognition that a series of "exceptional and temporary" circumstances might warrant a more flexible response.

"For example, there might be a severe economic downturn, a country might face a drastic slump in production due to circumstances beyond its control," Mr Santer said.

"It is very difficult to describe statistically what a severe economic downturn would be."

Mr Santer and the commissioner for monetary affairs, Yves Thibault de Silguy, had originally suggested that a recession would be deemed "serious" if national output fell by 1.5 per cent in a full year. But the EC yesterday removed all figures from the definition of a recession, allowing each case to be judged by the council of finance ministers on its merits.

Mr Santer, asked how many EU countries would qualify for monetary union in 1998, replied: "As many as meet the treaty conditions. I may have underestimated that number in the past."



Rescue workers help a humpbacked whale stranded in shallow water near Coolangubra on Australia's Gold Coast yesterday. The calf was finally freed after a seven-hour operation involving a slingshot. It had been dragged into shallow water after following its mother into a shark net. PHOTOGRAPH: GRAEBE PAGES

Afghan foot soldiers march on in the dark

Promiscuous alliances have left many in the ranks fighting more from habit than conviction, writes Jonathan Steele in Bamyan

IAN BLACK

DIPLOMAT

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why his local leaders are fighting them. He has never been to school, because the village has no school.

His mother and sisters never leave home because this is not accepted in the back-country. The Taliban militia's ban on professional women has shocked Kabul and the outside world. But it is fully in line with rural traditions, regardless of whether the village is Sunni or Shia.

Pashtun or Tajik. Field and house-work are all that women are allowed to do, even in small towns.

During an hour's stop in Ghorband, while a puncture was fixed, we did not see a woman in the main street.

"Fighting and shopping are all that Afghans ever do," a Kabul resident said. "If you can keep them shopping, there's some hope." By shopping, he does not necessarily mean exchanging money for goods, so much as sitting with the shopkeeper over endless cups of tea. It is a male affair.

Fighting can be a misnomer. The Taliban's recent capture of Kabul and its advance towards the Hindu Kush took place with barely a shot fired. After suffering two or three ambushes, it retreated in the same way.

Although the various groups have enough manpower to form an infantry, this pre-supposes some willingness to combine. When the Taliban lost the town of Charikar last weekend, the victors were not the forces of Ahmed Shah Massoud, the ousted defence minister. They were local Tajiks who took the guns from under their beds and rose up against the Pashtun invaders. They supported Commander Massoud, their ethnic compatriot, but were not part of his army.

Taliban holds talks with rival

THE powerful northern

warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostam held peace talks with a Taliban government minister yesterday, Afghan sources said.

Gen Dostam's four-hour talks with Taliban's acting foreign minister, Mullah Mohammad Ghaus, were attended by the Pakistani interior minister, Naseerullah Babar, and the leader of the Shi'ite Muslim Hizbe Wahadat faction, Karim Khalili, the sources said.

Meanwhile yesterday, the ousted government offered an immediate ceasefire with the Taliban if it evacuated Kabul and agreed to

talks on a political settlement. The foreign minister, Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, told the United Nations Security Council in New York that loyalist forces had reached the gates of Kabul but were holding back to avoid civilian casualties.

Mr Ghafoorzai called for international pressure on the Taliban to accept the ceasefire conditions.

The talks in Afghanistan, to resume today, were the first known high-level contact between Gen Dostam and the Taliban, which captured Kabul on September 27. — Agencies.

In the absence of genuine infantry, destruction is usually wrought from afar, thanks to the long-range weaponry rained on Afghanistan during the cold war. Kabul was brought to ruin by bombs and shells in the years before the Taliban advance.

Other wastage comes from reprisals. At Khatarhaq we saw a row of 30 shops which had been smashed and emptied last year by groups loyal to Cmr Massoud. At the time, Cmr Massoud's enemy was not the Taliban, but a section of the Hazara people. Yet Abdul Karim Khalili, their leader, recently formed an alliance with Cmr Massoud.

Victory is often bought rather than won. In Pul-i-Khumri, the provincial governor, Said Jaffer Nadiri, said he had captured six Taliban agents who had come to find commanders to bribe. "It is the common pattern all over Afghanistan," he said.

Sometimes people switch sides, running up a new flag when they hear a bigger group has taken power over the hill. In Doab heard of a group whom the locals called "Fake Taliban". When the real Taliban was on its victory roll, these men entered the town to take charge. When the tide turned, they hastily left.

They did not even loot — though they would have found precious little to take. We sat with Doab's newest guerrilla occupants in their unfurnished living room. Supper consisted of bread and rice. At bedtime they simply moved from a cross-legged position on the floor to a recumbent one.

Their one attraction was a short-wave radio. The favourite was Radio Tehran, with the BBC a close second. A foreign voice on air brought news of the latest fighting in the mountains. Third Mojahed cocked an ear and wondered what it changed.

PUK victories raise hopes of deal to thwart Saddam

IAN BLACK

DIPLOMAT

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IRAQ. The PUK and KDP strongholds and the front lines. The PUK now controls about 60 per cent of Kurdistan. Its forces are poised to cut the main road between Irbil and the KDP stronghold of Dokuk.

Iraq yesterday again accused Iran of interfering in the Kurdish areas by backing the PUK. Suggestions of Tehran's involvement — beyond discreet financial and logistical support — have not been substantiated.

Analysts say the KDP leader, Massoud Barzani, was aware that his alliance with President Saddam angered his supporters.

So far he has resisted the temptation to call on Baghdad again, which means

that the heavy weapons which turned the tide against the PUK last month have not been used.

After Iraqi troops and tanks helped Mr Barzani take control of much of northern Iraq in a lightning offensive, the US launched missiles at military targets in southern Iraq. It has since tried to mediate between the Kurdish factions.

The US, which spearheads an allied air force patrolling northern Iraq, fears losing more of its influence in the region to President Saddam or to Tehran.

Its goal now is to contain the fighting, and avoid further damaging splits in allied ranks (after French dissent last month) and welcome surprises before next month's US presidential election.

Both Kurdish factions have been told that agreement between them will allow the United Nations' long-delayed food-for-oil deal to go ahead and bring humanitarian relief to all Iraqis hit by sanctions.

The US state department said President Saddam had made a "ludicrous" demand to approve UN officials who would distribute food in the Kurdish areas under the food-for-oil deal.

Police alert after Lebed coup plot accusation

David Hearst in Moscow

ONE of Russia's feuding political warlords, the interior minister, Anatoly Kutikov, placed armed police on alert last night after alleging that his rival, the security chief General Alexander Lebed, was planning a coup.

He accused Gen Lebed of planning to set up an elite "Russian legion" and said he had received intelligence reports that Gen Lebed would be backed by 1,500 rebel Chechen fighters.

The claims were denied by Gen Lebed, who said he would join Gen Kutikov for change except the enemies. Local armed groups make and break alliances with military promiscuity. The one constant is that no one disarms. They just stash their weapons away for the next round.

Third Mojahed is on the bottom branch, barely knowing who the opponents are or

But the two have already ignored calls from President Yeltsin to stop their feud.

Gen Lebed last night tried to play down the latest spat. He said it was no secret that he had asked the interior and defence ministries to set up a brigade of up to 5,000 men, "to ensure that there would be some kind of power in the state".

The United States and Russia are on course for a new round over the ratification of the Start II arms reduction treaty, with Moscow demanding fundamental changes in the treaty which the Pentagon has said it will not countenance.

William Perry, the US defence secretary, will try to persuade deputies in the Russian state Duma (parliament), that ratification of the 1993 treaty as it stands is in Russia's interest, as it will release money that could be used to support its crumbling conventional forces.



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Thursday October 17 1996

trail

Clinton's arm

drug convicted

strike to hit airport

philophile jailed

trade inquiry

fine art foiled

the vast book, a

of theory, anecdote,

and rhetoric, small

interesting, small

to get out

A victory for people

So far so good on guns. But there is more to do

PEOPLE still count. Yesterday they scored a spectacular victory. The gun controls announced in Parliament by the Home Secretary were a triumph for ordinary citizens over the organised lobby. The new controls are far more stringent than this Government, with its umbilical links to the gun lobby, would ever have countenanced but for the nationwide anger over the massacre of 16 Dunblane children and their teacher in March. The true Tory position was revealed in August in the contemptible report produced by the Conservative majority on the Home Affairs select committee: not just the rejection of a ban on handguns but the repudiation of a host of other more modest ideas. But in the end, numbers mattered. There may be 57,000 people with handgun certificates, but 750,000 people signed the anti-handgun Snowdrop petition. Unlike the gun lobby, they did not employ professional lobbyists. Instead, they made their voices heard through every news outlet. Having come this far, they must not stop now. Yesterday was an important battle, but the war isn't over yet.

Michael Howard's package would ban all handguns from being held in private homes, ban all handguns larger than .22 calibre even from shooting clubs, and impose such stringent new security regulations on shooting clubs that, according to the Home Secretary, virtually all clubs would currently fall short. It would mean 80 per cent of the existing 200,000 legally-held handguns in the country would have to be destroyed. There would no longer be any high calibre pistols or revolvers available to the public. No multi-shot or self-loading handguns could be held. Mail order sales of guns would be ended and so would the sale of expanding ammunition, used in Dunblane and designed to cause maximum injury. Britain would not have gone as far as Ireland or Japan

but would have one of the toughest gun laws in the world. Pushed by the rising public anger over guns, Michael Howard has already gone considerably further than the Cullen inquiry suggested.

Sensibly, Dunblane parents are saying this is not enough. The Howard proposal would still permit 40,000 handguns to be held in clubs. Forensic experts say these single-shot guns could be converted into multi-shot weapons. Worse still, this political fudge is going to be far more difficult to police than a total ban. Some of the difficulties emerged as MPs cross-examined the Home Secretary yesterday. The handguns could be transported from one club to another but only under the escort of a third party. A .22 handgun can still kill. It remains more dangerous than a shotgun to the extent that it is more easily carried — and more easily concealed or camouflaged. The parents of the 16 murdered Dunblane children are right to talk about this "unacceptable compromise". They are right, too, to talk about the need to combat and reverse the growing gun culture in the UK.

The culture will not be reversed by just a handgun ban. There are two million registered shotguns and even more millions of air rifles. There is neither a licensing system nor an age limit on airguns. Chris Mullin, the Labour MP who drafted the minority report on gun control for the Home Affairs select committee, is right to want more controls on these weapons. Of course farmers and country people have a right — and a need — to shoot foxes, rabbits and other pests. But if handguns are to be banned from all homes, why cannot shotguns be banned from urban homes? This is for the future. A complete handgun ban is the immediate goal. One more push by the Snowdrop campaigners could produce an inspiring victory for flower power.

When a nation erupts . . .

But don't just blame Belgium; the fault is widely spread

THE EFFECT of nationwide trauma is now being felt by another country which has been shattered by a crime too shocking to comprehend. Yesterday a fresh wave of protest strikes erupted in Belgium at the news that a popular magistrate had been taken off the case of the alleged paedophile Marc Dutroux. It was the biggest display of mass emotion since King Baudouin died two years ago, and a huge vote of mistrust in the political system. Roads have been blocked, car workers have walked out of their factory, and firemen have used their hoses to demonstrate for clean government. More is to come on Sunday — with Belgian railways offering cheap day tickets for the big demonstration in Brussels. The publicity poster quotes from Albert Einstein: "The world is dangerous to live in not because of those who do evil but because of those who look on and let them do so." It is anger against those in power who have failed or have looked the other way, as much as anguish over the deaths of at least four girls, that fuels this remarkable explosion of public outrage.

The trigger was the removal of investigating judge Jean-Marc Connerotte, who is supposed to present the evidence impartially on both sides, after he had attended a fund-raising dinner organised by a group campaigning against child abuse. This might seem a trivial misstep on his part where caution was outweighed by sympathy. But the real issue was less the decision itself than

the memory it revives of a previous occasion when Mr Connerotte was taken off a case — that of the murder of the Mayor of Liege Andre Cools — in much more dubious circumstances. At the least, it is widely believed, the Cools case reveals the same mixture of incompetence and corruption which impeded proper investigation of Mr Dutroux for so long. At the worst, there may be an actual connection between Mr Cools's assassination (itself possibly linked to a massive robbery of stock certificates at Zaventem Airport in Brussels) and criminal activities (possibly including international car theft) which are associated with the paedophile network now being exposed.

The ruling to remove Mr Connerotte taken by Belgium's highest court, following complaints from the two main defendants in the Dutroux case, appears to have been legally correct. But it is a sign of the delicacy of the situation that Belgium's Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene had appealed personally to the five judges to show some "creativity" in reaching their decision. Newspaper editorials have been sceptical, reflecting general concern about a cover-up. The justice minister has now promised to reinforce the investigative team with an additional judge but this will hardly allay disquiet. The wider context is of a society which for too long failed to look at itself with sufficient honesty. It is easy to judge poor little Belgium harshly; but the failing is more widespread.

Bottling out of real choices

Why are we so seduced by the concept of mineral water?

WE WON'T fully understand modern society until we work out exactly why it is that so many of us spend good money buying mineral water when tap water is perfectly adequate. A bottle of mineral water costs around 60p for which you could get over 1,500 pints of tap water piped to your home. A recent Which? survey found that bottled waters weren't necessarily healthier than tap water and expert tasters couldn't tell the difference between assorted bottled and various still mineral waters: nor between bottled still water and tap water once it had passed through a simple filter — obtainable in most stores — to remove the taste of chlorine.

Our love affair with mineral water reaches a fatuous scale in restaurants where punters are prepared to pay anything from £2 to as much as £5 for a bottle of bubbly water rather than risk the social ignominy of asking for a glass

from out of the tap. The success of mineral water has reached a new frenzy with the battalions of bottled water flavoured with exotic tastes like blackberry or tangerine now sold in supermarkets at premium prices.

A report by the independent Food Commission this week found that many of the 24 varieties sampled contained artificial sweeteners and that more than half contained the preservative E211, an agent linked to hyperactivity, asthma and skin rashes. According to the report they are often sold next to mineral water and people are deceived into thinking they are healthy products. If people really want to continue to drink such triumphs of the marketing arts then we will, of course, defend to the death their right to do so. But equally strongly we will defend their right to read the small print to see what the ingredients really are. Preferably with a stiff glass of tap water to hand.



Letters to the Editor

On the road to nowhere

THE profane clap-trap, full of misrepresentations and falsehoods, peddled by Robert Key in support of the proposed Salisbury bypass must be condemned as it is corrected (Duel carriage-way, October 16).

This useless road will not solve Salisbury's congestion problems. The Department of Transport (DOT) figures show that, for example, on part of the inner relief road, there would be 32,550 vehicles passing each day without a bypass, and 20,000 vehicles with a bypass. A DOT witness admitted at the 1993 public inquiry that "it is not the function of the bypass to sort out local traffic problems".

Whatever Mr Key thrice denies, over 90 per cent of Salisbury's traffic is local, according to the DOT. Salisbury District Council now favours reopening the public inquiry to investigate alternatives; and the Department of the Environment privately opposes the bypass.

Indeed, the road will now generate new, additional traffic, although the DOT now refuses to release the study showing exactly by how much. Why, if the road will be such a traffic blessing? Friends of the Earth is challenging this devilish secrecy in the High Court.

If built, the bypass will desecrate 700-year-old views of the cathedral's magnificent, medieval spire, and will pass through a world-famous scene for his celebrated paintings of the cathedral. The road will ravage a wildflower-rich Site of Special Scientific Interest (supposedly protected in law), and straddle the Avon, Nadder and other rivers, which form part of probably the best surviving chalk river system.

We must not forget that Robert Key is that self-same advocate who, as Minister for Roads, proudly boasted to an Auto Express magazine in 1993 that: "I love cars. I

love cars of all shapes and sizes. Cars are a good thing. I also love roads. I have always loved roads." Enough from the devil-worshippers. Charles Secrett, Director, Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ.

AS "politically correct, emotional, fanatical, green Johnnies-come-lately" we can only assume that the stream of lies and abuse contained within was designed to provoke. The opinion poll cited by Key as showing 80 per cent support for the road has never been published, and rumour has it that the sample was taken largely from readers of the local Conservative Party newsletter.

The figure that 94 per cent of traffic using the A36 is local comes directly from the evidence submitted to the public enquiry by the Department of Transport and freely available to the public.

Robert Key would be impressed that the spokesman for the DOT stated at the public enquiry: "It would be wrong to give the public the impression that the bypass would take traffic out of the city centre."

The third point is the location of Key's house. It lies next to the existing A36. Key would be a direct beneficiary of the road as proposed by the DOT. However, a small-scale bypass of two villages also on the line of the A36, proposed in the early 1980s by the district council and since then by a variety of organisations, would end in a junction by Key's front garden.

The local scheme has attracted none of the partisan support that Key has given to the DOT's grandiose proposals. Such a flagrant abuse of personal advantage would appear to be yet another example of the sleaze and corruption that permeates our

current government. The DOT's decision regarding the Salisbury bypass has not yet been announced, but it is interesting to speculate on how much influence a single MP could wield with a government that has such a slender majority.

(Dr) Philip Wilson, Marian Reed, Prospect Place, Grove Lane, Redlynch, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 2NT.

AT last a rational view of bypasses — so different from the one-sided articles in Guardian Society. My village has been on important trunk routes since it was a Roman settlement and the old Great North Road twists and turns through the centre of the village. Thankfully, a small bypass was built in 1927 and further relief came with the opening of the A1 (M) in 1972.

I cannot imagine Welwyn surviving as a pleasant village without these, and I could cite numerous towns and villages up the A1 (Stamford, Newark etc) which have been transformed by such works. So please let us have more balanced appraisals of bypasses instead of the usual biased, politically inspired condemnations.

P Clarke, Becket Gardens, Welwyn, Herts AL6.

THE only one telling lies about the proposed Salisbury bypass is Robert Key. The road will not be a drain on the taxpayer because it will be funded by the Government's "design, build, finance and operate" contract.

As he well knows, the operator will be paid in so-called "shadow tolls", which come not from the motorists who use it but from central-government funds — ie tax-payers. Ross Clark, 31 School Lane, Haslingfield, Cambridge CB3 7JL.

All in the family: homosexuality, single parents, infidelity . . .

TONY BLAIR'S outburst on "family values" is unscientific populist tosh. Family Key to society, says Blair, October 15. If it is indeed "within the family that we learn the difference between right and wrong . . . and that there is such a thing as society", why, then, are so many young people, brought up in "normal" families, barely socialised, troubled and troublesome, and facing the future with despair?

Why are so many people finding that their needs (and those of their children) for a supportive and enabling domestic structure are to be found in radically different groupings where power, rights and responsibilities are negotiated, not given?

Whilst some families obviously function well, others are a disabling nightmare: values are brought into an institution by those who construct and constitute it.

If Blair's moral crusade is to amount to anything more than another pointless but voter-friendly shot at Back to Basics, the PM-in-waiting must attend more closely to the distinction between what is and what could/should be. Roy Cartwright, Chairman, British Organisation of Non-Parents, BM Box 5868, London WC1N 3XX.

TONY Blair's emphasis that "it is within the family that we learn there is such a thing as society" is greatly to be welcomed. But we must be clear what family values do and do not involve.

Family values are not about stereotyped roles for male and female, or about one person dominating others. They are about a determination to stick together through difficulties, and a love which allows each member space to exist and develop.

They are not about condemnation of single parents. They are about recognition that single-parent families, even if not the ideal, can be true families, which need recognition and support. True family values recognise that there is often a very narrow line between success and failure.

And family values do not involve homophobia. They do involve faithfulness, whether heterosexual or homosexual. (Rev) Eric Potts, 38 Ashburnham Way, Lowestoft NR33 8SJ.

TONY Blair talks of "support" for the family without once addressing the only support the state is in a position to provide: economic. AS

a society, we show our support for the job of child-rearing by paying families child benefit. We value child-rearing so much that we pay each family . . . just over a tenner a week per child.

As long as the market rate is that low, all the verbal support in the world is worthless. It would be nice if Tony Blair were to put his money where his prim little mouth is, and show a genuine commitment to families by supporting them in hand as well as heart. Jean Molloy, 25a Theodore Road, London SE13 6HT.

MY father is in his second marriage and my mother is remarried. My sister is divorced. I live with my girlfriend, and my brother, unmarried, lives in a squat. Would Tony Blair care to tell me which of us, if any, he considers "decent", and which of us is a threat to the fabric of society?

It'll probably be me. Worst of all, I'm a socialist. Ed Horton, 34 Birchfield Close, Oxford OX4 5DL.

I WOULD like to point out another cause of broken marriages: dating agencies for married people. If society does not respect the institution of marriage, how can we expect it to continue? The Guardian itself encourages the disintegration of family values by allowing these agencies to advertise in its pages.

Yasabelle Boatfield, (Mrs, but probably not much longer.) Cedars Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3.

Programmed

JOAN Bakewell (Media, October 14) preoccupies herself with BBC contracts while failing to address one of the key questions behind women's inability to get top jobs in TV: their desperately low ambitions for themselves. c/o Channel 4 Television, Horseshay Road, London SW1.

In production teams I've worked with, as writer or presenter, girls' and women's expectations of themselves follow a depressingly consistent pattern. Until more are not content to stay as secretaries and researchers in their 30s and 40s (virtually unheard of for men), change will be slow. Stephanie Calman, (Writer, Dressing for Breakfast.)

TONY Blair talks of "support" for the family without once addressing the only support the state is in a position to provide: economic. AS

A Country Diary

DURHAM: For months I'd walked past the mound of soil with little more than a glance in its direction. I passed by on the day that bulldozers pushed it into an untidy heap when they cleared the site for development. I watched from a distance as it greened in spring and then blazed with poppies in summer. Today botanical curiosity finally got the better of me and I strolled over to take a closer look. The poppies had become a forest of dry, rattling seed heads but most of the mound was still hidden under a luxuriant flora that had sprouted from the underground seed bank. The ground, crumpled up soil had provided a perfect seed bed, nurturing some magnificent specimens of arable weeds. Long, sprawling shoots of bugloss — a local rarity largely exterminated by agricultural herbicides, with ranks of sky blue flowers on either side of its bristly stems — tumbled down the slopes. Rustling orange plants that have run to seed caught the

autumn afternoon sunlight and rose up through broad patches of field pansy; straggling layers of black bindweed shoots; a crimson tangle of red stink stems with pink, knobby blooms; knotweeds with stems like wire decorated with papery pink and green flowers; sprawling field forget-me-nots; a spatter of henbit dead nettles (another casualty of 20th century agriculture), field speedwell, wild radish and deeply poisonous foot's parsley. After an hour of botanical rummaging the list had grown to over 30 species — corn field opportunists that had bided their time as dormant seeds, until sudden, violent soil disturbance brought them back to the surface. For a glorious flowering a farmer's nightmare perhaps, but a botanist's delight. And now, for every seed that germinated last spring there are thousands of new ones, mostly destined for dormancy, until their chance comes again. PHIL GATES

Sports news

PLEASE publish the names and phone numbers of the proprietor, editor and reporting staff of the Sport newspapers (The Sport of Misogyny, October 16), so that I and other of your readers can let them know directly how we feel about their papers. I understand this is a system of public accountability that the Sport itself particularly favours.

Peter Giffin, New North Road, London N1.

OVERHEARD at Birmingham New Street last Tuesday: "The delay to the Bristol train has been caused by the failure of a pre-arranged train owned by another company. I despair." Simon Hinsley, 74 Furness, Glascoate, Taunworth B77 2QQ.

SOME years ago a cinema near me was showing The Ten Commandments, whose scriptwriter is certainly old enough to leave John Bull's trio (Letters, October 16) at the starting post. Martin Shore, 29 Clinton Road, Leatherhead KT22 8NU.

COME from Domestic Street in Leeds (David McKie, October 16), which was quite pleasant Pleasant View, close by, was very domestic. I don't know what symbolism is in the fact that Perseverance Street, near Leeds United football ground, was only about 20 yards long. Tony Hodgson, 14 High Street, Ingham, Lincoln LN1 2YW.

SAFEBURYS SUPERMARKET EXPRESS CHECK-UP 3 AILMENTS OR FEWER

The NHS, supermarket tested

STEPHEN Dorrell wants to rejuvenate the NHS by silencing GP surgeries in supermarkets (Big primary health shake-up may give new role to nurses, October 16). Press releases suggest this would be most beneficial to inner-city patients. As a GP in Collyhurst, Manchester, an area that none could deny deserved the title inner city, I have been struck by the difficulties my patients have in finding healthy, affordable food. The supermarket chains

are conspicuous by their absence. The main source of supplies is the off-licence-cum-newsagent-cum-grocery-store, where provisions are rarely fresh, choice is limited and profit margins are high. By all means let the supermarket chains come to Collyhurst, but only then can the minister talk about a health gain. (Dr) Harold Weinstein, Whitley Road Medical Centre, 1 Whitley Road, Collyhurst, Manchester M40 7QH.

We're getting rich. Please hold

HOW I sympathise with John Preston (Letters, October 15), despairing victim of automatic switchboard syndrome. But I'm afraid his plea to companies will not dissuade them because the automatic switchboard is a quite brilliant little earner for both them and BT. Consider. The sweet-sounding recorded voice tells you to press "one", if you want such and such "two" if you want so and so, and so forth, until the bottom line is reached: "I'm sorry, all our operators are busy. Please hold the line, your call is in a queue and will be

answered as soon as possible." So there you sit, terrified to hang up in case you lose your place in the virtual-queue. How long you wait depends on how many phone-enquiry staff the company has now discovered it can "let go". As your phone minutes clock up, you can reflect that not only has the company's wage-bill burden been neatly shifted onto your phone bill, but the increase in your phone bill has also deluged BT. Stanley Walmsley, Middleton, Barnard Castle, Co Durham DL12.

Diary
Matthew Norman

WHEN my sniffly friend Michael Howard abolished the right to silence, few were more thrilled than the Police Federation, whose line on the subject it has so often expressed in the much-loved cliché of the hang-'em right. "The truth shouts to be heard". How curious, then, to note a report in Police Review magazine about the Police Complaints Authority's investigation to the death of Brian Douglas, Mr Douglas, a black man from South London, died in Kennington nick last May from a fracture caused by a single blow to the head, and the PCA investigated. The authority now angrily blames the failure of its enquiry to find much evidence on the refusal of two PCs — Paul Harrison and Mark Turf — to be interviewed, on their solicitors' advice. At this criticism, the Police Federation is furious and — in one of the all-time classic masterstrokes of unintentional irony — has written to the PCA to point out... that the European Convention of Human Rights, which protects the right to silence. Make it up you couldn't.

DISQUETTINGLY, the career of my friend Dr Julian Lewis is threatened on two fronts. His hope of winning New Forest East could yet be imperilled if his old libel foe Simon Regan of Scillywag decides to stand against him (the Diary considered standing, you may recall, he was frightened of splitting the vote), while his status as Central Office's top-ranked dial-twiddler — he spends the days scouring the airways for "anti-Tory bias" — is undermined by a TV appearance during which he denounced the stifling of free debate on Europe. Soon after, his boss Danny Finkelstein was heard expressing doubts about whether such candour is compatible with his job. The silly sausage is confused as to whether a spin doctor's job is to incite controversy within his party or to stifle it. Let's hope he has now worked it out.

YESTERDAY'S inquiry about Kenny Ball and his jazzmen has been answered. "I have been inundated with calls from colleagues pointing out how remiss I have been in not keeping Kenny's name in the forefront of the national press," writes John Martin, his manager. The boys are playing 200 dates a year, Mr Martin relates, and have 19 CDs on the market, one of which he encloses along with pictures of Kenny with Louis Armstrong, Mike Yarwood, HRH The Queen Mother and "Kenny's own special Royal" his wife Michelle. To readers too young to have seen them on 1970s chat shows, however, the boys remain a closed book. This is not right, and we hereby demand a speedy return to TV of Kenny Ball and his jazzmen. Messages of support appreciated.

MAX Clifford calls to dampen rumours that he is soon to be made a Labour peer (Lord Clifford of Chelsea Strip, perhaps). "It's not going to happen," says Max, a fervent Labour supporter, "at least, not for a while." This does not mean that Max, who addressed the Mitcham Labour Party on Monday, will be working any less hard for election victory. "I'll be doing whatever I can," he explains. "I've got two or three stories that will cause problems for the Tories up my sleeve, and I'll be releasing them at regular intervals between now and May." When might we expect the next? "I'll pick the right time. If certain people make a prominent speech about family values, it'll be the next day. It's about maximum impact."

AT OKI magazine, puzzle king Gyles Brandreth has a new colleague. Weather girl Tania Bryer makes a hugely impressive debut by fecklessly interviewing Claudia Schiffer. "The only thing I felt slightly uncomfortable discussing with Claudia is her relationship with magician David Copperfield," Tania concludes. "I did discreetly notice that she wasn't wearing her multi-carat engagement ring. Well, maybe she just wanted to give her finger a rest." Lynn Barber will be shaking in her boots.



Secrecy here is the enemy of justice

Commentary Hugo Young

PARLIAMENT was once regarded as the sacred vessel of democracy and all that went with it: freedom, law, accountability, the rest. Parliament was where everything began and ended, the supreme assize of the nation, the body nobody could gannoy. But the way Parliament is about to deal with the huge balloon of fetid air that goes by the name of the Hamilton Affair puts that reputation at risk. More disturbingly, it reveals how blind MPs have become to the proximity which their holy inheritance has already attained to the edge of the abyss.

prove invulnerable to a shadow of doubt. Before some challenges to Parliament which strike the people with less horror than they strike the politicians. At the very least, the looming supremacy of judges over politicians, and the already existing fact of EU law's supremacy in certain areas over British law, ask a question about real public attitudes to Westminster. These are, to say the least, disenchanting. Feet of clay come in many guises: Parliament's remoteness, its subservience to the executive, its failure to tame ministers, its idleness over Europe. Such easily observed deficiencies already carve a wide gulf between the political and the public view of Parliament. And now on top of them comes the suspicion that the Commons has descended from being the assize of the nation into a self-serving club that makes its own rules, which it then declines to enforce. The Nolan Committee's work has not yet altered that perception.

That's the context in which the Hamilton inquiry takes place. Yet the form agreed for it seems to show a chronic failure to appreciate what's at stake. Its procedure is a strange one, which has no precedent. A quasi-judicial apparatus is to be set in place which is not, however, pre-

sided over by a judge but by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. He will apparently have power to call for witnesses and documents with all the authority of a court, and will be given staff and lawyers to help him. There will be evidence and counter-evidence, cross-examination, a verdict or verdicts, a summing-up, and then a report.

But this will not be a court in any usual sense. It's worth remembering what it replaces. As far as Mr Hamilton and Mr Ian Greer are concerned, there was to be a full-scale court hearing which they decided to abort. The salient features of that court would have been established rules of procedure, adversarial examination of the evidence, and total publicity. The salient feature of the Commissioner's inquiry is that it will all be done in secret. The procedure will be invented as it goes along, the evidence is likely to be selective, and even if it's not, there will be no way of knowing until after the inquiry is finished.

What Sir Gordon has now been told to begin need not change much. There would still be lawyers, and a trial of the evidence. This would probably fall short of what a full-scale court could put on. But everything would be out in the open. If the rules were bent, we would see it. If the evidence was neutered, we would know it. If the witnesses lied, we would hear it. If the judges began to behave like party politicians, their conduct would be on the record for everyone to contemplate. With a searchlight shining down, all these transgressions would be less likely to occur. As it is, and however great the integrity Sir Gordon brings to the table, behind closed doors they are a clear and present danger. Even if they don't happen, they won't have been seen not to happen. The defining folly of Parliament and its occupants is to remain stubbornly, righteousness, blind to what this means.

AGAINST a background of cynical and let's-face-it justice, Parliament any longer plays in British life. I find it barely credible that the Commons should have glided so swiftly towards the kind of inquiry

Casualties of the mania for markets



Ian Aitken

FOR reasons too complex to explain, I spent almost two hours on Monday sitting in the autumn sunlight outside the main entrance to Saint Bartholomew's Hospital in London. Though a curiously higgledy-piggledy building, it is a magnificently beautiful edifice. In the glowing light, it looked exactly what it was — a prime piece of what we are now required to call the National Heritage. One couldn't help reflecting that our heritage is precisely what Virginia Bottomley is currently supposed to be protecting. For she is Secretary of State for the Heritage Department, a job in which she combines looking after places like the Tower of London, the jewel in our crown, the National Lottery. Yet it was Mrs Bottomley, in her earlier manifestation as Health Secretary, who reached the almost inconceivable decision that Bart's should be closed. Incredibly, she decreed that its functions should be transferred to the Royal London. All that will be left of Britain's oldest and most famous hospital is a minor-injuries department. For some time, all this seemed so manifestly wrong that most people assumed that ministers would come to their senses and reverse the decision. Yet when Mrs B was replaced by the more cerebral Stephen Dorritt, nothing happened. Now the Royal London is embarking on a vast rebuilding programme designed to encompass Bart's, and we are still remorselessly heading for the greatest act of cultural vandalism since the destruction of Coventry Cathedral. With people like Virginia Bottomley in charge, it is folly to assume that common sense has the remotest chance of prevailing. But they are on the way out. It is time to start twisting the arms of the shadow cabinet. Bart's must be saved.

First Hutton would expound his concept of a "stakeholder society", and then Skidelsky would thump it round the ring. The fun was in the contrast between the two men. For Hutton is large, amiable and appealingly diffident, while Skidelsky is short, sharp and extremely pleased with himself.

Readers of this page will have an idea of what Hutton means by the word "stakeholding". In broad terms — and the terms are always pretty broad — it involves encouraging businesses to act in the long-term interests of their employees, customers and local communities instead of exclusively serving the short-term interests of shareholders. To this end, Hutton proposes the creation of a "legal architecture", or framework, designed to help the process along. This, he argues, would encourage the teamwork among workers and managers which he regards as crucial to commercial success in a competitive world. He contrasts this with the kick-up-the-backside approach to man management which is characteristic of free-market theory. Until recently, the Hutton thesis was high on the Blairite agenda, but (for reasons which remain obscure) it now seems to have dropped off it again.

David Windlesham argues that Parliament now has the chance to legislate for handgun sanity and safety — and avoid the bloody slaughter prevalent in the US

Target for tomorrow

THE response of the Government and Opposition parties to the tidal wave of moral outrage generated by the Dunblane shootings is a rare, but heartening, example of how the latent opinions of the majority can prevail over minority, but highly articulate, interest groups. Of course the target-shooting interests have a right to be heard, and for their arguments to be carefully considered, as they have been. But there are other and deeper issues which affect everyone: the potential victims of gun misuse, their families and friends, and the communities in which they live.



lian majority in the House of Representatives voted to repeal the assault-weapons ban, denouncing it as an unwarrantable infringement by federal government on the rights of the individual citizen. To its credit, the Senate declined to follow suit. The key feature of the gun-control debate, which should never be forgotten, is the intrinsic dangerousness of all firearms, but handguns particularly, because of their portability and greater ease of concealment. The decision to own a handgun, and the privilege to use it in target shooting, is not simply a personal one. There is a wider public interest. Handguns can be stolen; they can be used to settle domestic quarrels; they can be the cause of accidents in the home, frequently involving children; and they facilitate suicide. In America, with no more than minimal regulations, all of these factors combine to make handgun ownership a major public health problem. The medical profession has come to regard the frequency of accidental and non-accidental deaths and other injuries involving firearms as a national public-health problem approaching epidemic proportions. Mercifully, this is not true in Britain. Yet human nature is the same, and the number of reported incidents of violent crime is on the increase. Hutton of the Observer and the right-wing economic historian Lord Skidelsky. These two intellectual prizefighters trundled round the seaside resorts like a pair of old-fashioned bruisers taking a boxing booth round the fairgrounds. Organised by the Social Market Foundation, their encounters provided both entertainment and enlightenment.

Fortunately the number of people killed by firearms each year in Britain is low by international standards. Over the five-year period 1989-93, the annual average of 54 incidents of homicide was recorded initially in England and Wales in which the apparent method of killing was by shooting. The number of suspects found guilty of murder involving shooting as a percentage of all suspects found guilty of murder varied between 6 per cent and 16 per cent in the decade 1984-94. The Home Office has recently established that nearly one in

three firearms used in domestic homicides between 1992 and 94 was legal. The contrast with the United States is stark. In 1993 nearly 70 per cent of the murders, 42 per cent of the robberies known to law enforcement, and a quarter of reported aggravated assaults were committed with a firearm. In that year a total of 16,189 Americans were murdered with guns, and in 13,262 of these killings a handgun was the weapon used. In her recent speech at the Democratic National Convention,

Sarah Brady, the Republican chairwoman of Handgun Control Inc, estimated that each year nearly 40,000 Americans were killed with a firearm, including suicides and fatal accidents. Over 100,000 more were wounded. Every two hours a child was killed somewhere with a gun. Despite such shameful figures, the hostility towards the mildest forms of regulation, instigated by the Brady Bill imposing a five-day waiting period on obtainable background checks to be made on the intended purchaser of a hand-

gun, meant that the legislation was fought tooth and nail in Congress over a period of seven years before finally becoming law in 1993. In the following year, a non-retrospective ban on the manufacture, as well as the possession or transfer of military-style assault weapons brought the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act to the brink of the abyss into which so many previous attempts to curtail the alleged right to keep and bear arms had fallen. As recently as March of this year the Repub-

Women and children first

Beatrix Campbell insists that only by listening to the victims of crime can New Labour develop a truly new morality

TONY BLAIR'S homilies about traditional family values are wrong, wrong, wrong. This amiable authoritarian's moral mantras for Labour, a new Holy Trinity of Family, Community and Nation, is emptied of the conflicts and solidarity, power and powerlessness, that makes the world go round. He told his Blackpool audience that when he was growing up "family was strong". But the strength was often founded on secrets: on children's silence and women's suffering, on absent fathers and lonely mothers. That was when fathers spent an average of 11 minutes a day with their little children. As my mother says, "women have always been single parents". These days full-

time working mothers spend more time with their children than full-time housewives in the 1950s. Who, then, is the problem? The genesis of Blair's new traditionalism lies in what his aide Peter Mandelson describes as a "seminal speech" in 1993. He "found his voice" in that speech, which "defined the man which he imprinted his character on the public mind", says Mandelson's revealing, if eccentric, manifesto, The Blair Revolution. This speech was Blair's response to the killing of two-year-old Jamie Bulger by two 10-year-old boys. He warned that "if we do not learn and then teach the value of what is right and what is wrong, then the result is simply a moral chaos which engulfs us

all". But Jamie Bulger's killers did know the difference between right and wrong. Blair should have wondered: what was it in these children's experience that took them on their long journey to murder? Why wasn't Blair interested? Mandelson was right: this was a defining moment in British politics, when the Beav Blair offered a new culprit and adults conjured a new enemy: children. Grown-ups are the dangerous generation, however; but New Labour has averted our attention from adult assailants — typically men — in all-too-traditional families and directed our gaze at their victims and apprentices. Blair insists that New Labour's proposed curfew is only "child protection". But he has sponsored a sense of a society besieged by fatal tots, and supported the demonisation of children during a decade in which we have discovered

just how dangerous childhood can be. This "seminal" speech launched his crime and community discourse. But this, too, has erased the evidence who keeps communities together, and who saps their will to live. A correlation between family crisis and crime just isn't there. Indeed, research commissioned by Tyneside police shows that, if anything, it is the traditional, two-parent, fathered family that yields young criminals. HOME Office research published last year is unequivocal: the correlations between family and social class and crime are "weak", but the causal connection between young men and crime and their peer culture is "strong". Since 88 per cent of offenders in court are young men, you can't talk about crime without the cultural history of masculinity. But nowhere in New Labour's prospectus for cracking community crime, nor in Blair's itinerary of "teenage tearaways, vandals, drug-dealers...", do

the words boy, man or masculinity appear. What is Blair afraid of? Men's loss of legitimacy? Fathers' loss of authority? Masculinity is under scrutiny as never before. Except in New Labour. And these days, though adults might not like what they say, children speak, sometimes they shout and scream. What has New Labour to say to the desperate — not demonic — children who make 10,000 calls to ChildLine every week? Blair cheekily translates New Labour's proposed child curfews as child protection. But no one with power or influence has been given a child-protection portfolio in his shadow cabinet. That tells us what he is interested in: child control. There is an alternative. He could do something unprecedented for a Labour leader: create an alliance with traditionalists, challenge woman and children — towards a new settlement within communities, towards co-operation rather than coercion between genders and generations, a new, not an old, morality for New Labour.

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Finance Guardian

Wickes faces official inquiry

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

EXPECTATIONS that the Department of Trade and Industry and the Serious Fraud Office will start a formal inquiry into the troubled DIY concern Wickes grew yesterday.

It emerged that both bodies have been in contact with the company which yesterday admitted that it has unearthed potentially criminal attempts to mislead its own auditors.

Suggestions that investigating authorities may have foundation to begin an inquiry emerged as Wickes made public a sanitised version of its exhaustive inquiry into how the business "overstated" its profits by more than £50 million.

The DTI last night said that it could "neither confirm nor deny" that it was conducting a formal inquiry. The SFO said it was not "currently investigating the company".

But a spokeswoman refused to comment further. Compiled at a cost of more than £4 million, the independently researched report discovered evidence of "serious mismanagement" and disclosed that two former directors have agreed to repay more than £2 million worth of bonuses paid out on the back of false financial information.

Full publication of the report is being withheld because interviews were conducted under terms of legal privilege. Copies of the document have not been sent to either the police or government authorities.

The company, which earlier this summer suspended its shares after financial irregularities were discovered, confirmed that profits have been inflated because of "liberate misrepresentation" of rebate deals with its string of 160 suppliers.

Wickes is now likely to refinance with a £30 million rights issue and re-list its shares early in the new year.

It said that this financial readjustment will wipe off £33 million from shareholders' funds. It is also making a further £10 million provision because of its exposure to property leases. The company's financial position was covered up by "false or misleading documents" submitted to the auditors.

But the report disclosed that the company has dropped all charges against the former chairman and chief executive Henry Sweetbaum and finance director, Trevor Llewellyn, both of whom deny knowledge of any wrongdoing.

It is taking no action against auditors Arthur Andersen who are to resign the account. But it reserves its right to proceed with legal action if new evidence emerges.

Compiled by Linklaters & Paines and Price Waterhouse, the report — a letter to shareholders — concluded that ultimate responsibility for the events which led to the suspension of shares in Wickes earlier this summer must fall on Mr Sweetbaum.

He is to pay back £1.2 million in bonus money and relinquish claims to a further £285,000 but will retain £2.9 million of pension benefits. Mr Llewellyn is to pay back just over £800,000 while Michael Corner, group administration director, has quit — with no action pending against him. The two directors in charge of the buying department have already been fired. Disciplinary proceedings are still continuing against middle ranking executives and more junior employees.

The letter from chairman Michael von Brentano disclosed that the group made an operating loss in the first nine months of the year. Mr von Brentano pledged to bring the group back into profits over the next year.

How to make a million . . .

Case 1 Sofa king's £100m present

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

THE two grown-up children of self-made sofa magnate Sir Graham Kirkham, look set to pick up more than £100 million by selling their shares in DFS — the soft furnishings empire built up by their father after he left school without any qualifications at 14.

Michael and Julie Kirkham decided to sell their 22 per cent holding in the company because they are now "married with their own children" and want to diversify their investments, Sir Graham said yesterday.

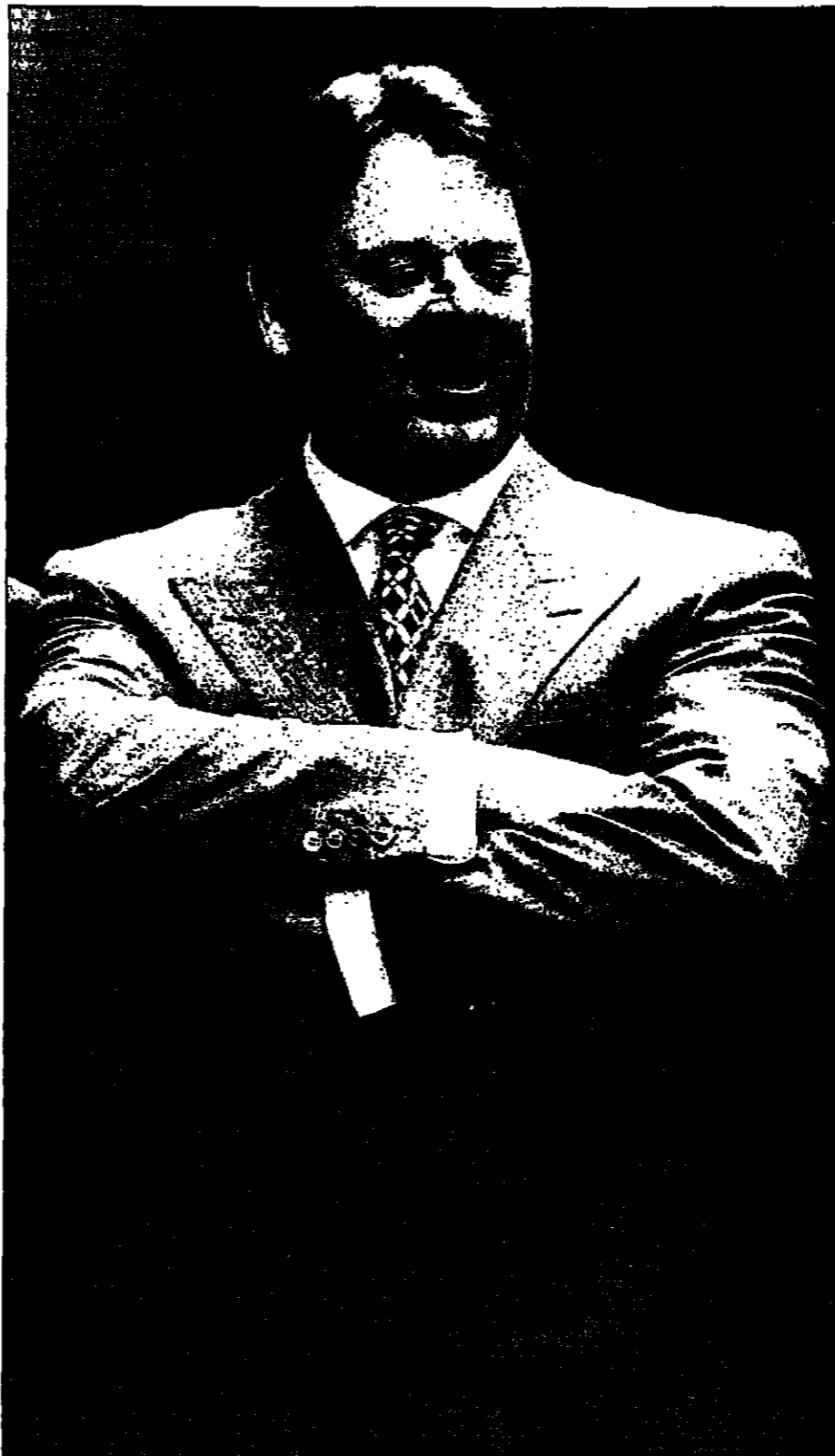
The deal represents a glittering wedding present for Michael, a 29-year-old charity worker who got married in Dublin last month. His daughter Julie, aged 30, has left her job at Yorkshire Television to look after her two babies full-time.

His children's lifestyle is in huge contrast to the humble upbringing of 51-year-old Sir Graham, born the son of a Yorkshire miner.

Sir Graham, who was knighted in the New Year Honours list, faced widespread criticism when it emerged that he had made substantial loans to the Conservative Party.

From his thin gold Patek Philippe watch, to his collection of Old Masters, he is now seen as a mainstay of the establishment. Worth an estimated £250 million, he lives in Cantley Hall, Dunstable, Bedfordshire.

News that the 22 per cent share stake is to be placed on the market sent DFS shares up 22p to 514p. The fall overshadows the announcement that profits are up 18.6 per cent to £31.1 million for the year to July 27. The company's



Sharing . . . Miner's son Sir Graham Kirkham is worth about £250m. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILVAGE

cash position is so strong that it is giving a 10p-a-share special payout to investors for the second year running. The dividend is

being increased by just over 20 per cent to 10p. Sir Graham, who floated the company on the Stock Exchange in 1993, said

sales were accelerating because of DFS's decision to diversify into the South from its traditional base in the North and Midlands.

Notebook

Bubbling salaries bring big danger



Edited by
Alex Brummer

IN THE High Court, a judge earning £98,957 a year awarded the former chief executive of BET, John Clark, £3 million for loss of office, following the takeover of his company by Rentokil.

In East London Mary Walz, a woman associated with the Barings crash, the biggest in British financial history, is asking the chairman of an industry tribunal to force her former employers to pony up the £500,000 bonus promised just before the Leeson balloon went up.

At investment bank Goldman Sachs some 125 staff worldwide, including several in London, are expected to move into the £1 million salary bracket after stepping up to become managing directors — a stage below the partnership level.

No doubt each of these cases of super-rewards can be argued on its merits. Mr Clark, at 55 years old, had a rough deal being turned out of BET just as he was beginning to turn the services group around. But the idea that as a chief executive he is too old to be re-employed is laughable; he is broadly the same age as George Simpson, who is just beginning to make his first waves in the most significant job in British manufacturing, at GEC.

Good chief executives, like high quality football managers, are — we so often are told — like gold dust. In that case, Mr Clark, with £3 million on deposit, can quickly expect to see himself back at the top, despite the underpaid judge's sympathy for his case.

At Barings it is almost irrelevant as to whether Ms Walz was in the line of control which led to Nick Leeson's fall experience and whether it was catastrophic failure at Barings, and to most of us it seems like common sense that in such circumstances bonuses would not be paid. Had ING not stepped in and Barings been formally liquidated, there is no way with £800 million of losses that she or anyone else would have received a penny.

Which brings us back to Goldman Sachs. As a partnership, it has a particular problem in disgorging its gains. There are no shareholders to please through higher dividends or share bonuses, just the core of staff which keep the huge fees rolling in. But the partners at Goldman Sachs could look at other possibilities, rather than fuelling the destabilising pay race in finance.

They might consider the Barings, Daiwa, Sumitomo and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell experience and whether it might not be more prudent — giving the size of their dealing book and the volatility of markets — to build bigger reserves.

They could break the cycle of spiralling investment banking fees and commissions and lower their price to customers; they could even do more pro bono work for entrepreneurs operating in disadvantaged economies — such as those of Eastern Europe and Africa.

Instead, the value system in investment banking becomes more distorted with each upswing in the financial cycle. Salaries, bonuses and fees are bid upwards and the pressure increases on all those involved to perform and keep awarded rolling in even in hard times.

It is circumstances like these, unstable reward structures, which create Nick Leeson-style problems and cause problems with fund managers like Peter Young of DMG. This is a suitable case for regulatory treatment.

DMG stampede

CERTAINLY DMG, with Cimro looking over its shoulder, deserves some praise for avoiding the "lone nut" syndrome, which characterised the Barings failure. In removing from office five senior executives, including the head of fund management, Keith Percy, and Michael Wheatley, head of compliance, it is in essence acknowledging a serious management and control failure, which in the case of an independent merchant bank could have been catastrophic, not just for savers in the DMG European trusts but for the whole concern.

The DMG move is as much one of self-preservation as anything else. Without the changes it would have been that much more difficult to reverse the redemption stampede.

Wickes waffle

IT WILL damage the future of Wickes and the reputation of the SFO if no attempts are made to prosecute those implicated in what appears to have been a systemic fraud inside the firm's buying department.

As yet the new team at the troubled DIY concern appears to have no plan to forward evidence to the official channels, despite the conclusion that there has been more than just serious mismanagement.

The most alarming finding in the highly sanitised report into why Wickes discovered a £50 million "black hole" in its accounts is that false information was submitted to its auditors.

This is a criminal offence which has resulted in virtually wiping out shareholders' funds and jeopardising a business which employs 5,000 people. Having spent more than £4 million on lawyers to investigate the affair, Wickes has a duty to ensure that matter is passed on to the appropriate authorities.

The report raises significant questions about endemic fraud in the international building supply industry. The new teams were expected to sweep clean the entire company. Instead, they have succeeded in whitewashing the boardroom walls.

Oldest merchant bank in US scrutiny

Paul Murphy

A QUESTION mark hangs over the £1 billion sale of the world's oldest merchant bank, MeesPierson, to Belgian financial services conglomerate Fortis, after the discovery of accounting irregularities in a venture capital business linked to MeesPierson's office in New York.

The bank has had to write to investors in a specialist fund, which lends working capital to small American businesses working on US government contracts, warning them of its concerns over how the fund is run.

A spokesman for MeesPierson confirmed an investigation was under way, but declined to name the fund. He said there was no question of

any irregularities within the bank itself and insisted that the scandal would have no effect on the Fortis takeover.

The matter is said to have come to light after MeesPierson's recently appointed chairman, Thomas Abbot, ordered an investigation into the way the venture capital business operated. The bank is understood to have encountered similar problems in the same business three years ago which cost MeesPierson \$26 million (£16 million).

Insiders at the bank say the investigation, which also involves an unnamed Irish bank, has also spread to its London office, from where the New York operation is supervised by Han Dalmlin.

Earlier this month, Fortis signed a letter of intent to take over MeesPierson with owners ABN Amro.

French back Thomson sale to BAe partner

Lagardere's defence disposal coup will benefit British firm, report Mark Milner and Simon Beavis

THE French government yesterday underlined its determination to push through a shake-up of its defence industry by backing the sale of state-owned Thomson to Lagardere, British Aerospace partner in missile manufacturing.

The disposal of the defence and consumer electronics group is a key part of French plans to rationalise the country's defence manufacturing base and yesterday's decision is likely to lead to increased BAe involvement in the process.

Yesterday's government announcement made it clear that it preferred to sell Thomson to Lagardere rather than rival bidder Alcatel Alsthom because it fitted its broad defence industry strategy.

The decision on which bid ultimately triumphs rests with France's independent privatisation commission, but yesterday's public support from the government will be seen as significantly tilting the odds in Lagardere's favour.

If it does get Thomson, Lagardere has said it will put the latter's missile business into the existing joint venture between BAe and its own missile subsidiary, Matra. That would make it likely that the British company would have to put money into the venture in order to maintain its 50 per cent ownership.

Last night BAe welcomed the French government announcement but suggested that it would be some time before the shape of the new relationship would be worked out.

France's prime minister Alain Juppé underlined the importance of industrial strategy as the crucial determinant in his decision to back Lagardere, rather than Alcatel Alsthom. "We have opted for the offer which was the best to further our defence interest and which would constitute a world-leading industrial group with strong export capacities," he said.

The Thomson Matra group which will be formed, if the privatisation commission gives its permission, will be the second biggest group in the world in professional electronics," he said.

Europe's fragmented defence industry has come under increasing pressure to restructure to be able to compete with the massive American defence groups produced by a series of recent mergers. The current French restructuring is seen as a crucial precursor of wider European moves.

"The government has preferred industrial logic," analyst Gilbert Ferrand at CDC Bourse said. "This will allow the development of a defence champion which will be able to offer complete systems."

The deal — costing a symbolic one franc — will also have to clear the European Commission's competition authorities because the French government plans to inject some £1.1 billion (£1.34 billion) into Thomson to cut its £725 billion debt mountain.

Lagardere which has substantial media interests, including Elle magazine, has already said that it will sell Thomson's multi-media division to the Korean group Daewoo, which in turn has promised job creating investment in France.

Case 2

Lisa Buckingham

JOHAN Clark, the former chief executive of business services group, BET, who was sacked after the company was taken over by Rentokil, was yesterday awarded £3 million in compensation by the High Court.

But Rentokil, the company best known for its pesticides, immediately said it would appeal against what it regarded as "just such an enormous sum of money."

The award — more than three times the pre-trial settlement Mr Clark had been offered but £3 million less than the total he eventually claimed — is one of the highest pay offs in British industry.

But a survey from pensions consultancy, Pirc, estimates that UK companies have paid out nearly £70 million in compensation to directors in the past three years.

Mr Clark, who is 55 and had claimed during the hearing that his chances of landing a similar job at his age were remote, said he was "very pleased" with the outcome. He was now keen to pursue the search for a "new challenge" as chief executive of a major organisation.

Janet Gaymer, head of employment law at Simmons & Simmons, said evidence pointing to John Clark's age would be a "very useful" benchmark in future cases. It is estimated that on top of the payment to Mr Clark, Rentokil will have to pay several hundred thousand pounds in legal costs. The

Case 3

Paul Murphy

THE league of Britain's £1 million earners was yesterday swelled by 30 London employees of the banking group, Goldman Sachs, writes Lisa Buckingham.

The annual round of creating new "partner managers" in the high-flying Wall Street bank yesterday saw 125 lucky workers around the world elevated to the top echelons.

It is understood that 30 of those are based in London and 11 are British. Although not all will immediately soar to the ranks of the £1 million-a-year club

company, however, disputed a figure of £600,000.

American-born Mr Clark, who lost his job in April, said: "I regret it was necessary to bring my claim to court." He said he had attempted to settle in a "private and mature" way out of court.

Mr Clark, who joined BET in 1991, was dismissed after Rentokil won a closely fought £2.2 billion takeover battle.

most can expect such riches in a short time. In addition to stratospheric salaries, Goldman's newly elevated partners will learn early next month the scale of the top-ups they can expect from annual bonuses.

Mary Walz, the former executive of the collapsed Barings merchant bank who is claiming an unpaid £500,000 bonus for 1994 from new owners ING Barings, will have to wait two to three weeks to discover the outcome of her industrial tribunal case after the chairman yesterday reserved judgment at the end of the third day of hearings, writes Colin Weston.

Future of Morgan's top woman in doubt after dismissals

Paul Murphy

THERE was speculation yesterday over the future of Morgan Grenfell's most senior fund manager Nicola Horlick after the investment bank confirmed the sacking of five executives tarnished by the Peter Young affair.

Ms Horlick, the head of Morgan's successful pensions and management business and one of the most powerful

women in the City, lost the internal battle over asset management boss Keith Percy's future when he was sacked yesterday.

Ms Horlick, responsible for hiring Mr Young and two other fund managers from her previous employer, Mercury Asset Management, but who has not been implicated in the scandal involving three of Morgan's European investment funds, is credited with setting the investment tone

which has helped Morgan's money management business grow over recent years. She was unavailable for comment yesterday but one senior Morgan insider said last night: "Nicola lobbied long and hard for Keith to be retained in some sort of role. Now that he has gone we have had a statement from her saying she is committed to the group. But to be frank, relations are strained."

As expected, the current head of Morgan's development capital business, Robert Smith, was confirmed yesterday as the new chief executive of the asset management division.

Following Mr Percy out of the door are Glyn Owen, chief investment officer for Europe, Graham Kane, head of Morgan's unit trust business, head of compliance Michael Wheatley and also Paul Ebling, another compliance officer.

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Austria 13.85	Germany 2.3750	Japan 1.529	South Africa 7.00
Belgium 48.86	Greece 373.50	Netherlands 2.6575	Spain 199.50
Canada 2.088	Hong Kong 11.95	New Zealand 2.216	Sweden 10.35
Cyprus 0.7190	India 56.40	Norway 10.10	Switzerland 1.665
Denmark 9.413	Ireland 0.9575	Portugal 240.40	Turkey 140.00
Finland 7.23	Israel 5.05	Saudi Arabia 5.91	USA 1.53

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Thursday October 17 1996
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Birthdays
Emily Sheffield

'Beat a Cheat' campaign weeding out bogus claimants helps produce biggest fall for two years

Hotline cuts dole queues

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

THE Government's "snoopers hotline" is weeding out bogus jobless claimants and helped to produce the biggest fall in Britain's dole queues for almost two years last month, it was disclosed yesterday.

Officials said the 80,000 calls received by the Benefits Agency since the launch of the "Beat a Cheat" campaign in August was a factor behind the fall of 35,600 in the number of people out of work and claiming benefit in September.

Last month's reduction in the jobless total brought the official unemployment figure down to 2,073,100 - its lowest level for more than five and a half years - and on course to drop below the two-million level early next year.

Employment Secretary Gillian Shephard welcomed the fall - which was double the August reduction - saying it proved that the Government's economic policies were working. "Unemployment is not just falling but falling faster", she said.

Ministers are also hopeful that rising living standards will mesh with lower unem-

ployment and higher house prices to generate support for the Conservatives in the six months that remain before next May's likely polling day. Data from the Office for National Statistics showed that average earnings are growing at 4 per cent a year for the first time since mid-1994. With inflationary pressure weak, living standards

are currently rising by more than 3 per cent. Officials believe that the outlook for jobs has improved over the last few months, even though they feel that the September decrease was flattened by a number of special factors.

The ONS said more graduates were going off the jobless count than in previous years,

while the fact that September was a five-week month accentuated the downward trend. The introduction of the Jobseekers Allowance came too late to affect last month's claimant count, but would reduce the total by 35,000 after six months. However, it said that the Benefits Agency Fraud Hotline did have an effect on the September data.

In the summer, the ONS estimated that unemployment was falling by 10,000-15,000 a month, but they now put the trend at a monthly fall of 15,000-20,000. This is in line with the average fall of 16,900 in the six months to September.

But while the jobless total has been cut by 190,000 in the past year, and fell in every region of the UK last month, the vast majority of the new jobs created have been in part-time work.

The Government's Labour Force Survey - a quarterly poll of 60,000 people - showed yesterday that only 14,000 full-time jobs were created in the past year, compared with 156,000 part-time posts. Male full-time jobs have fallen by 36,000.

Labour seized on the LFS data to launch a fresh attack on the claimant count measure of unemployment, calling the figures "entirely bogus".

Cautious Chancellor faces economy still deep in hock to creditors

KENNETH Clarke's cautious Budget strategy was vindicated yesterday when the latest set of borrowing figures showed the Government almost as deeply in the red as it was this time last year, writes Larry Elliott.

Despite rising consumer demand, the public sector borrowing requirement in September was £3.4 billion,

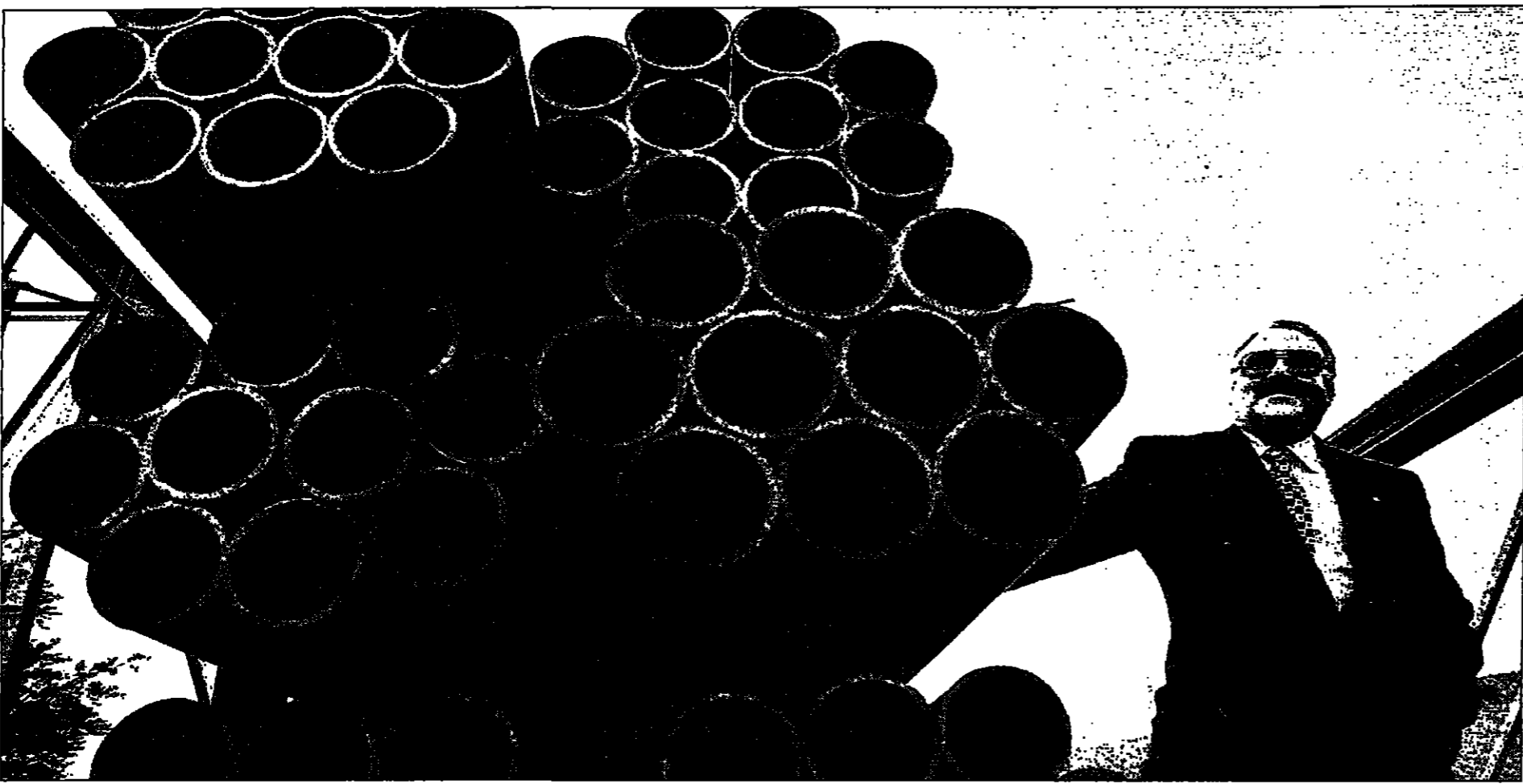
even with a £1 billion windfall from privatisation receipts.

The Treasury blamed an exceptional £1.2 billion debt interest payment on index-linked gilts for the unexpectedly high borrowing figure, but the painfully slow progress in cutting the PSBR will form the backdrop when the Chancellor maps out his Budget strategy at Dorneywood tomorrow. He is expected to deliver tax cuts of only £2 billion-£3 billion on November 26, matched by spending cuts.

According to the latest figures, the PSBR in the first six months of the 1996-97 financial year stood at £16.1 billion, down from £20.1 billion in the corresponding period of 1995-96.

However, the improvement was almost entirely due to higher privatisation receipts. Stripped of the state sell-offs, the PSBR was £19.5 billion in the half-year to September, against £20.1 billion a year ago.

Officials said the Chancellor was still confident of hitting his £26.9 billion forecast for 1996-97.



Work for the likes of Dutch airline KLM at Heathrow and Rover at Cowley helped structural steel fabricator Wescol to pre-tax profit of £1.2 million in the year to July 31 - up 50 per cent. Managing director Alan Walker, pictured at the company's Halifax headquarters, is recommending a final dividend of 0.7p per share, up from 0.5p. PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS THOMSON

CBI's leader finds reasons to support minimum-wage laws

Richard Thomas
Economics Correspondent

ADAIR TURNER, director-general of the CBI, said yesterday that German-style minimum wages and tough employment laws could help firms to boost productivity and compete in world markets.

In a marked departure from the confederation's formal opposition to state-set wage

floors, Mr Turner said British exporters were not helped by the "flexible" labour market, and suggested that German firms were more focused on quality and efficiency as a result of laws to protect jobs and wages.

Speaking to a conference on European business, Mr Turner said: "Some aspects of inflexible labour markets (in Germany) - limitations on shedding labour and minimum wages - may indeed

have acted to stimulate a relentless focus on productivity to minimise the labour input."

But the CBI chief said high minimum wages and restrictions on hiring and firing had made it harder to create jobs in the labour-intensive service sector.

"Continental Europe's problem, compared to the US, is not... international trade competitiveness, but the fact that it achieves high produc-

tivity but low intensity job growth."

In a speech more likely to appeal to Tony Blair than John Major, Mr Turner disputed claims that the "Anglo-Saxon" model of free labour, deregulated industry and residual welfare had boosted economic growth.

"German per capita growth has actually exceeded that of the US over the past five years, the past 10 years and the past 20 years," he said. "I

can't look at the data and reach the conclusion that the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon model is proven."

Mr Turner criticised pundits who had pointed to high German wages as a drag on growth. "Yes, Germany has high wage rates," he said. "But, so long as they are sustainable, high wages are a sign of success, not failure."

He added that the privatised utilities last month where Britain performs better than

continental countries, Mr Turner said short-term attitudes were still eroding business performance.

"Clearly there are plenty of companies and institutional investors that do take a very long-term view," he said. "But overall, I'm struck by the way that UK companies have left manufacturing sectors in which German or French or Japanese companies have managed to flourish."

Pilots with the travel bug wanted by airlines

WORKFACE/A union ticket gives entry to high-flyers' hiring forum. Keith Harper reports

IF YOU'RE prepared to travel anywhere in the world and are a trained pilot, you can get yourself fixed up with work, as 250 job seekers found this week when they attended an employment fair set up by the British Airline Pilots' Association.

Two bulky Australians, former pilots themselves, trawled the fair, creating considerable interest. They were acting for Korean Airlines, one of the fastest-growing companies in the Asia-Pacific rim. Korean is expanding so fast it is desperately short of captains to fly its jumbos.

One of them, John Moxham, who heads an international crewing organisation, said Korean needed 48 senior captains immediately at salaries of around £75,000, and a guarantee of nine clear days off a month. Not the ideal job for a family man perhaps, but tempting enough to appeal to a younger person with no domestic commitments.

The BPA conference, the first of its kind and not before time, since few unions make much effort to assist unemployed members, reflects the global market in jobs. Insurance managers are now com-

muting between Sussex and Costa Rica, and civil engineers from Buckinghamshire to Singapore, because they cannot find work in Britain.

All the carriers, small and large were on show, from British Airways to Gill Airways, which flies out of Newcastle and recruits 24-year-old captains for £25,000. Senior executives from each of the carriers strode to the rostrum with the hard sell. BA may recruit you as a cadet. This means that you do not have to

pay out large sums of money to train yourself in an industry where investments of between £20,000-£40,000 are required by aspirant flyers.

The common fallacy which suggests that all pilots are high earners, have two houses, private medical insurance and send their children to private school was exploded by pay rate revelations from several carriers.

British Airways is the notable exception. Its captains get £77,000, and there is a starting salary of £28,000. Over the next five years, the company may need 1,342 pilots, although as things stand

today, the figure is only 858. Pay at Britannia Airways varies between £25,000 to £70,000 with a £2,000 holiday concession, and Richard Branson pays his captains around £55,000, with Christmas bonuses thrown in.

Under this elite stratum, however, is a different world. Gill pays £14,000 for a first officer and a new company, Debonair Airways, based at Luton, has a salary scale of £27,000-£42,000. Clearly, many of the smaller outfits are used as training grounds for the big companies. They are prepared to accept all comers, including helicopter pilots.

In an overview of the industry, Sir Michael Bishop, British Midland's chairman, said that while job opportunities were reasonably good over the next few years, pilots had to be aware that the industry was becoming more competitive and passengers were "moving towards low cost operators".

Sir Michael believes that the increasing emphasis will be on leisure travel. Air transport has done well from business, but the onset of the Internet, the video and the fax, means that many middle managers are not travelling abroad so often, and this has important implications for airlines.

The pilot of the future may be flying to more faraway bucket-and-spade locations in the Far East than bread-and-butter business destinations like Frankfurt, New York and Chicago.

Underside

Dan Atkinson

LORD Rees-Mogg is to share his less-than-happy recent experiences as head of GEC's remuneration committee at a seminar on November 27 on top pay.

His lordship was at the centre of the storm over the original £10 million offered to GEC's incoming managing director, George Simpson. Lord Rees-Mogg will chair the seminar, which will cover "directors' remuneration post-Greenbury". And post-Simpson, of course.

GOOD to see Robert Fleming's multiple problems with its Hong Kong offshoot, Jardine Fleming, have not distracted the bank from the pressing task of exposing those closer to home guilty of un-German activities. But then the tedious business of sacking "rat" traders and a rogue fund manager cannot have been half as exciting as pontificating about the need to embrace our Teutonic neighbours. A dinner Tuesday night, held by the Fleming-sponsored German-British Forum, "awarded" anti-Prize to the editor of the Daily Mirror, the novelist Frederick Forsyth and the cartoonist Charles Griffin: a communique from Fleming HQ tut-tutted about these gentlemen's "least positive efforts" in the field of "improving understanding".

Yesterday the forum held a conference on whether the future of European commerce lay in the German or

the British way of doing business. On the latter subject, at least, Fleming can boast some hard-won expertise.

HURRAY for Easycall, the two-year-old distance-destroyer with a rather nice telecoms company attached. The hoofed one's roller-coaster performance (wins at Leicester, Newmarket and Goodwood, a doze in August when he ambled in fourth at York, followed by a 5-1 win at Leicester last month) has new peaks a week ago with an 11-2 triumph at Ascot. His next outing, however, is uncertain: he'll be "having a rest", according to his FR man, Victor Trocki.

ELSEWHERE in the wonderful world of communications, the Dutch group KPN this week launched Altus, its new ring-from-anywhere satellite-telephone service. Whether on the prairie, the pampas or deep in the jungle, just point one of KPN's magic boxes at the sky and dial. Unfortunately, with

communications being the tricky business that it is, the publicity literature loses something in translation. "Introducing Altus," booms the cover of the information pack below a picture of a tiny figure in snowy wastes, "the 'phone system that works absolutely nowhere". That should have read "in the middle of nowhere". Or perhaps not.

MEANWHILE, our old buddy the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi has clearly had enough of being the sky, retiring son of the desert and has embarked on a publicity spree of Lord Archer proportions. "A Statesman of Vision and Generosity" declared a full-page advert in Tuesday's Wall Street Journal Europe below a pic of His Highness and above a photo of what looks like a tropical Bracknell New Town, presumably the go-ahead Sheikhdom. Densely-packed script praises the Sheikh's "keen sense of responsibility". Finally: "The debt of gratitude owed by the people to this one man cannot be over-estimated". Don't ever change.



News in brief

BT tries to pull plug on rival Global One

BRITISH Telecom is seeking a court order to halt the operations of Global One - the rival communications business owned by Deutsche Telekom, France Telecom and Sprint.

BT, together with its German joint venture partner Viag Interkom, told a Düsseldorf court yesterday that the European Commission had made the creation of Global One conditional upon there being two national suppliers in addition to the state telecom monopolies, France Telecom and Deutsche Telekom.

It claimed that Vebs was the only other national supplier in Germany and that it had only been granted a licence on Tuesday. The two other licences announced on Tuesday were for local networks in Cologne and Frankfurt. There were no alternative suppliers in France.

A Deutsche Telekom spokesman said: "Three new licences were granted yesterday, so we think the EC conditions are fulfilled." He claimed that BT's action was "disruptive", coming just days ahead of the German group's offer for sale which is expected to raise about £6.3 billion. The court is expected to rule in a fortnight's time. - Nicholas Bannister

Japanese readers draw blank

READERS of Japan's Sankai daily newspaper got a surprise yesterday when they found much of its afternoon edition blank.

Space usually given over to large advertisements was left bare as part of Newspaper Ad Day - to instil in readers a feeling that something was missing. The 14 advertisers involved contacted themselves with having their names in small print in the centre of the spaces they would have occupied. - AP

Distiller's price-cutting plea

SCOTCH whisky distiller Burn Stewart, whose Scottish Leader brand sells about 250,000 cases a year, yesterday called on the industry to halt price-cutting.

Unravelling a drop in pretax profits to £1.01 million in the year to June 30 from £3.96 million the year before, group managing director Ian Bankier said: "We would like to see supermarkets pay 50 per cent more for the product, which if it was entirely passed onto the consumer would put 50p on a bottle." Leader, a blended whisky, costs about £9.90 a bottle in supermarkets. - Dominic Walsh

GEC chief's plunder

GEORGE SIMPSON, the newly appointed managing director of GEC, has plundered the last two companies he worked at for directors in a move to build his own top management team at the company presided over by Lord Weinstock for more than 30 years.

Jack Fryer is joining from car components group LucasVarity to become strategic planning director. Robert Meakin, director of personnel at British Aerospace, assumes the same post at GEC. Both are expected to join the board.

Mr Simpson left BAe just over two years ago to take the top job at Lucas where he helped push through the recent merger with Varity. - Simon Beavis

Exclusive bid deadline looms

BIDDERS for Granada's collection of 17 Exclusive hotels - inherited as part of January's £2.9 billion Forte takeover - have until Monday evening to submit final and final bids.

A source close to Granada denied reports yesterday that the Sultan of Brunei was the front-runner to buy the Hyde Park Hotel in London with a bid of £90 million.

"The jury is still out on whether best value is going to be achieved from selling the hotels as a package or by individual transactions," said the source. "There's no way we've picked out the Sultan of Brunei or anybody else."

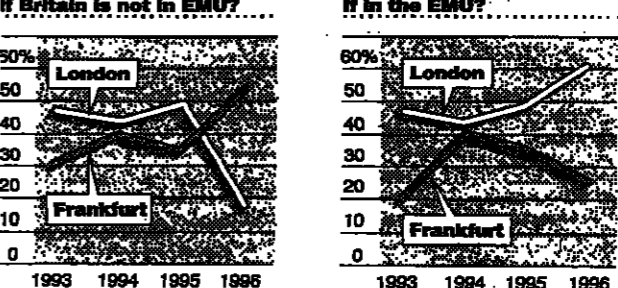
He said that if Granada plumped for a single buyer, an announcement could be expected "fairly quickly". Marriott, the US hotel and catering giant, is understood to be among the bidders for the entire package, which could fetch more than £1 billion. - Dominic Walsh

Extra topping at PizzaExpress

THE restaurant group PizzaExpress confirmed yesterday that it is to pay £25 million to buy out up to 33 restaurants operated by its franchisees. The deal, first disclosed by the Guardian last month, will be financed through share issues in the UK and US. The 33 restaurants have a turnover of £18 million. - Dominic Walsh

Top financial centres

Which city over the next five years, do you think will be the most influential financial centre of Europe...



City to 'lose crown' if Britain rejects EMU

Mark Miller
European Business Editor

LONDON would lose its position as Europe's premier financial centre if Britain opted out of monetary union, according to a survey of business leaders.

More than half of the 500 European managers and directors questioned said they believed the City's crown would pass to Frankfurt if Britain did not sign up for the single currency - but six out of 10 said London's grip would be strengthened by joining EMU.

This is the first time that the survey, carried out annually since 1990 for property consultants Healey & Baker, has come to the conclusion that a British opt-out from EMU could seriously damage the City's wealth.

Previous surveys have shown that business leaders were convinced that London's position would not be challenged whatever the de-

cision over the single currency.

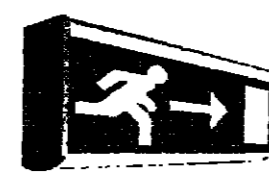
This time, however, only two in five believe London could keep the top slot if Britain did not sign up for EMU.

"The change in attitude comes despite the decision of a number of continental banks to increase their operations in London. Earlier this week, for example, Dresdner Bank said it would concentrate its Eurobond operations in London."

But Michael Cassidy, the chairman of the Corporation of London's policy and resources committee, believes that a growing awareness of a political dimension to EMU may be influencing attitudes.

"We are in the fortunate position where banks and other major financial institutions have been voting with their feet in coming to London."

"However it is now apparent that the political dimension is beginning to feature in commercial location decisions. Saying it is not our problem is not an adequate response."



"Bess Bjorn Havn committed an act of random kindness when he left 20,000 pounds to a caretaker, in memory of the time he had sewn up Havn's broken flies."

SEE BACK PAGE

Copy 10/20

Motor Racing

Hill makes the most of his capital gains

Richard Williams sees the newly crowned world champion wrap up business in the West End of London yesterday

THE very first Formula One world champion, Nino Farina, ticked the box marked "no publicity". After wrapping up the 1950 title he refused all interviews and went home. Damon Hill also went home yesterday, newly crowned as the 25th champion, but not until he had signed for the final few hundred photographs and answered the last of a thousand questions.

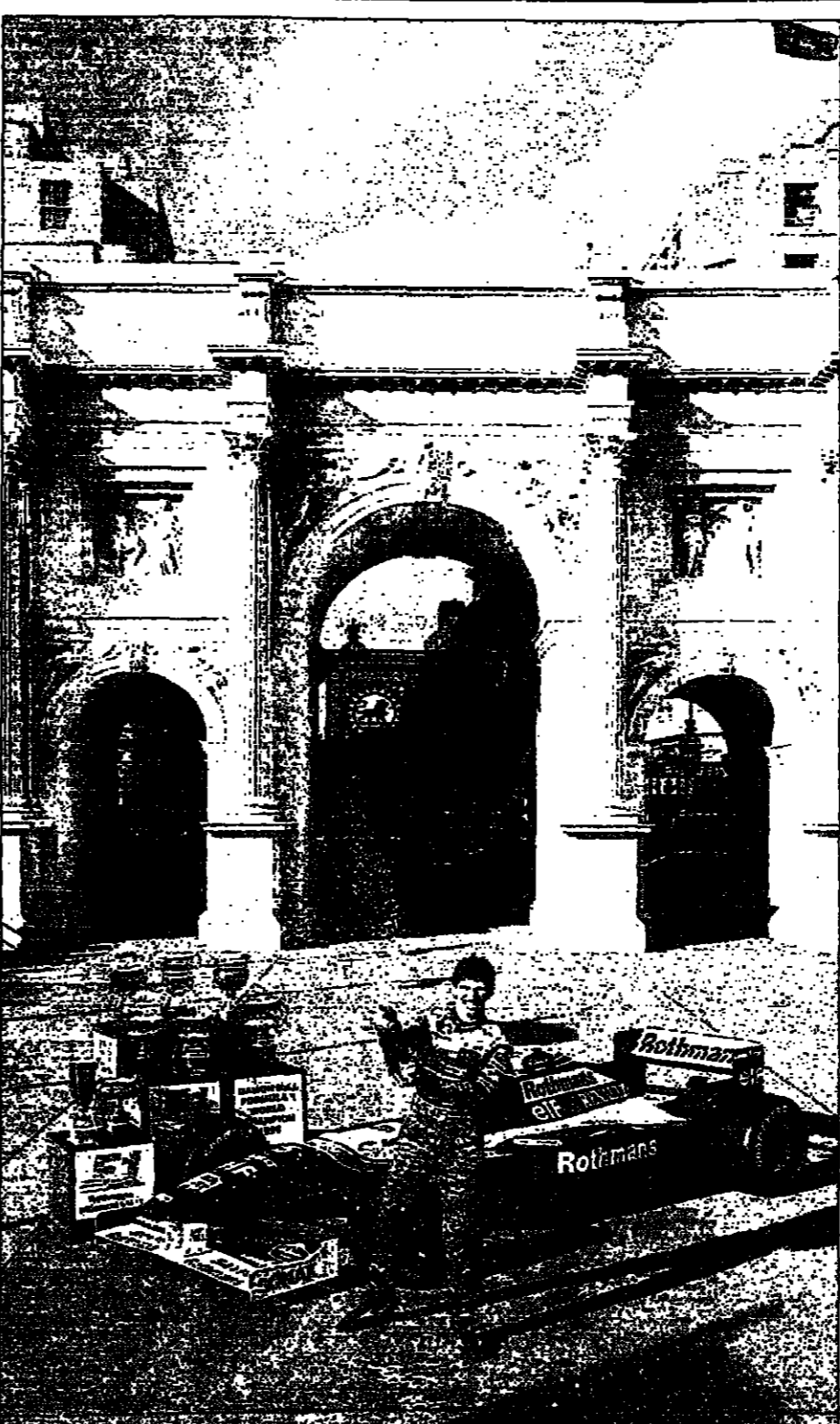
McRae holds off Sainz for victory

COLIN MCRAE yesterday won the San Remo Rally for the first time in his career. Last year's world champion, driving his Subaru Impreza 555, finished 22 seconds ahead of Carlos Sainz in the penultimate event of the world rally championship.

last moment, and I wouldn't have had it any other way." He had nothing to say to those who criticised his driving during the year. "I won half the races this season, and the championship, I believe I couldn't possibly have been asked to do anything more." The criticisms, he said, had motivated him. And to those who claimed he was bad at overtaking he offered two words: "It's rubbish."

Channel 4

4.15 BLOODS LASHING HANDICAP (m) 12.50. 10.000 HARRY DANES (2) (9) G. Hill 4-10-0. 10.000 HARRY DANES (2) (9) G. Hill 4-10-0.



Champagne special... Damon Hill catches a splash at Marble Arch

Racing

Jockeys halt Haydock over 'unsafe' ground

Graham Rock

JOCKEYS refused to ride in the second race at Haydock yesterday because they thought conditions were unsafe and the stewards had no option but to abandon the remainder of the card. A confidential report on the incident is being prepared for the Jockey Club.

Before the meeting began the clerk of the course, Philip Arkwright, addressed the jockeys in the weighing room. He told them that a six-yard strip of ground on the bend was the safe limit for racing, allowing three horses to race up the inside.

At a subsequent inquiry those who decided to have the race under protest were handed out fines of between £750 and £250. The Derby winner Shaamit will not run again. He sustained a tendon injury while contesting the Arcturion and the colt's owner, Khalifa Dasmal, has decided he will be retired to stud.

Newmarket runners and riders with TV form

Table with columns for race number, name, and TV form details. Includes races like 1.30 Overbury, 2.00 Silver of Portman, 2.55 Wible Cupper, 3.10 Bathhouse, 3.40 Luccombe, 4.15 BLATANT OUTBURST (m), 4.50 Cuttable.

Redcar with form for the televised events

Table with columns for race number, name, and TV form details. Includes races like 1.40 Pietro Bomba, 2.55 Mignonne, 3.25 Road, 3.55 Woodhead (m), 4.55 Ace of The Driver, 5.00 Here Comes A Star.

Channel 4

Table with columns for race number, name, and TV form details. Includes races like 4.15 BLOODS LASHING HANDICAP (m), 4.50 CUTTABLE, 5.00 HERE COMES A STAR, 5.10 BATHHOUSE, 5.40 LUCCOMBE, 6.15 BLATANT OUTBURST (m), 6.50 CUTTABLE.

Channel 4

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Includes races like 3.25 STANLEY RACING HANDICAP 1m, 4.00, 4.10, 4.20, 4.30, 4.40, 4.50, 5.00, 5.10, 5.20, 5.30, 5.40, 5.50, 6.00, 6.10, 6.20, 6.30, 6.40, 6.50, 7.00, 7.10, 7.20, 7.30, 7.40, 7.50, 8.00, 8.10, 8.20, 8.30, 8.40, 8.50, 9.00, 9.10, 9.20, 9.30, 9.40, 9.50, 10.00, 10.10, 10.20, 10.30, 10.40, 10.50, 11.00, 11.10, 11.20, 11.30, 11.40, 11.50, 12.00, 12.10, 12.20, 12.30, 12.40, 12.50, 13.00, 13.10, 13.20, 13.30, 13.40, 13.50, 14.00, 14.10, 14.20, 14.30, 14.40, 14.50, 15.00, 15.10, 15.20, 15.30, 15.40, 15.50, 16.00, 16.10, 16.20, 16.30, 16.40, 16.50, 17.00, 17.10, 17.20, 17.30, 17.40, 17.50, 18.00, 18.10, 18.20, 18.30, 18.40, 18.50, 19.00, 19.10, 19.20, 19.30, 19.40, 19.50, 20.00, 20.10, 20.20, 20.30, 20.40, 20.50, 21.00, 21.10, 21.20, 21.30, 21.40, 21.50, 22.00, 22.10, 22.20, 22.30, 22.40, 22.50, 23.00, 23.10, 23.20, 23.30, 23.40, 23.50, 24.00, 24.10, 24.20, 24.30, 24.40, 24.50, 25.00, 25.10, 25.20, 25.30, 25.40, 25.50, 26.00, 26.10, 26.20, 26.30, 26.40, 26.50, 27.00, 27.10, 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Jockey rebellion ends racing, page 13
Gascoigne sent off against Ajax, page 14

A final lap with Hill, page 13
The prodigy-before-last, page 15

SportsGuardian

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group C: Fenerbahce 0, Manchester United 2

United are up and away

David Lacey

MANCHESTER United began to look part of the modern European football community here last night...

Routine warnings to stay off the streets and avoid battles if Fenerbahce won...

The situation demanded a more positive performance from Alex Ferguson's team last night than had been evident against Juventus in Turin...

This should not be what Manchester United are about. Last night they had the chance to remind Europe of the force they intended to become again on foreign fields...

With Pallister, sufficiently recovered from his back injury to join May at centre-back, Johnson's task was immediately clear...



Dancing attendance... Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, right, and Halil Ibrahim step out in the Fenerbahce Stadium last night

men forward in the opening minute and forcing a corner, Manchester United were soon having to fall back in the hope that with Cruyff tucked into the middle, Fenerbahce would not find the sort of space so assiduously ex-

ploited by Juventus. Okocha was having few problems in this respect. After 12 minutes he initiated a multi-passing movement which pulled the United defenders this way and that before the Nigerian arrived to

drive a 20-yard shot low past the left-hand post. Two minutes later Cruyff, set up by Gary Neville and Cantona, saw a shot deflected high and wide by a defender. Nothing came of the corner but at least United were

still an attacking force. So, to United's continuing discomfort, was Okocha. Having flicked the ball, Best-like, past Neville near the left-hand byline he created a sharp chance for Kostadinov, the ball rebounding off the Bulgarian's knee for Bolic to drive it a fraction wide. Then Okocha left Pallister in a confused heap before shooting past the same right-hand post.

Manchester United's best opportunity of the first half followed a neat series of short passes by Butt, Cantona and Solskjaer which left Cruyff with only Rustu to beat. The shot was hard and true but Rustu deflected it behind.

The moment proved portentous. Ten minutes into the second half United took the lead, four minutes later they scored again. After Johnson had won the ball in midfield an incisive diagonal through pass from Cantona sent Solskjaer through with Beckham running free to his right. The

Norwegian drew what remained of the defence towards him, then slipped the ball to Beckham, who drove it clinically past Rustu from a narrow angle. Manchester United's second was initiated by Solskjaer's backheel to Cruyff, who appeared behind the defence near the left-hand byline and, with the defence spread-eagled, crossed short and low for Cantona to turn the ball into the net.

Between times Pallister, recovered from a first-half blow to the chest, had blocked a shot from Okocha and in the next instant tackled Bolic as the Bosnian tried to pounce on the rebound. Fore and aft, therefore, United were much improved.

One more last hoorah for Campo



Frank Keating

THE Wallabies rugby union tourists arrived in Sicily on Tuesday. They had their first gentle, jet-legged training spin yesterday at Palermo's well appointed Campo di Rugby. Most of you will know that campo means field in Italian. All of you will know that Campo also means something of far grander and glittering opulence in the many-tongued Esperanto of world sport. In that universal language it means unique, it means genius, it means the most original player the code has known. It also means David Campese, the Pomme-baiting lip who shoots from the hip.

Yes, praise the Lord and pass the sparkling fizz, Campo's back for (he again insists) one final throw and show; and next Wednesday the man who has scored by far the most tries in international history will play his 100th Test match. The venerable Philippe Sella, solemn centre with the pudding-basin cop's hairdo, is the only other to post the century. Well, venerable in as much as Sella was 34 in February. Only eight months in it, for David Campese will be 34 next Friday, and though his own once-dandy hairstyle has rapidly receded since last a British wind so resplendently ruffled it as he goose-stepped at a lick down one of our touchlines, he insists that his ball-player's brain is as acute, daringly inventive and mischievously schoolboyish as ever.

Only Campese's compatriot Dame Nellie Melba can have milked more farewell performances. This column has already dabbed its moist eyes in an acclaiming and heartfelt all-hail and farewell to the nutter and nonpareil in the ochre jumper piped with green. I've just been scurrying around the floor to find the faded old parchment cuttings from seasons ago, each headlined with variations of "Goodbye Campo and thanks".

After the Wallabies' resounding British grand slammer of 1984, this page wailed: "We'll never see his

like again." We did, of course, three years later, and then there seemed no doubt it was The End when he signed off in the very last match of a ruff-necked Arms Park against the Barbarians with a flamboyant 60-yard try — and the grand, vast amphitheatre to a man rose to him as he trotted back to the halfway line, a great tarpaulin of sound enveloping him in a cheer to and the certainty they would never see him (or his like) again.

But, merciful heavens, we did. The 1991 World Cup was, among other glittering Australian things, a further farewell tour for the wonder on their wing. Who can ever forget his truly court-courting dance which carried his side through the quarter- and semi-finals on those two successive weekends of grandeur at Lansdowne Road in Dublin? And that time it was, sure as eggs, the very final final goodbye when Australia took the cup the following week at Twickenham.

Wrong again. A year later he was back; and, as indelible as an action replay, there was a try at Cardiff almost identical to the one four years before, this time with seemingly all 16 Welshmen baying behind him like rugby's equivalent of the Wicker Man, with the hare gloriously reaching sanctuary. And once again all Cardiff, as generous as it was awestruck, made standing-up farewells with a deafening approval. For the Welsh might not play rugby very well any more, but they know rugby all right. I have never heard such a pointed acclaim for one man on a rugby field.

And now the balding blighter is coming back again. Post the century on Wednesday, celebrate it through to Friday, and then to Britain for a final-final-final lap of honour. He says he means it this time. Really? Well, this is his 18th Wallabies tour. Easily half of them have been his "last". He must have two sleevesful of gold "retirement" watches.

WHICH reminds me, a few of us clubbed together to buy him a present, a farewell keepsake and memento of our prescient esteem, after Australia were knocked out of last year's World Cup in Cape Town. It looked like curtains then, particularly as the old touchline entertainer had been so upstaged by the precocious JCB Jonah Lomu. But the very idea of a parting gift infuriated him. "Retirement? Me? See you in Europe with the Wallabies next year."

And so it has come to pass. Hooray for it. And hooray for him.

BECKSENTRICS

THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL WORLD OF EUROPE'S FREE THINKERS

EURO STAR OF THE WEEK

OPER MOUTH, INSERT FOOT

Beware, hubris, approaching Draggart Louise Frithaugh, author of adulterer's handbook 'How to Fool Around Without Getting Caught', had his comeuppance when he was caught with another man's wife in France.

ZIPPED DOG DAH

In an age when warlocks seem unappreciated, it is good to hear of at least one baronious relationship between management and shop floor. Boss Bjorn Havn committed an act of random kindness when he left 20,000 pounds in his will to a caretaker, in memory of the time that he had sown up Havn's broken flies before he made a speech in Sundsvall, Sweden.



FRYING THE DUVET

A recent sleepwalker's convention in Amsterdam played host to all manner of odd behaviour. After the guests went to bed the hotel was plunged into turmoil as the sleepwalkers emerged. One was spotted urinating into the guests' suggestion box, another was found in the kitchen frying his duvet and a third was discovered feverishly straddling the cold meat buffet.

DOWN FOR THE COUNT

Some people just have too much time on their hands. Take Fred Gable, from Brighton, who has spent the last six years writing out all the numbers from one to a million in an attempt to enter the Guinness Book of Records. Unfortunately for Fred, it turned out that the numbers have to be in words, not digits, and so he has started again. Latest reports indicate he is up to number 22.

PLAYING BY THEIR OWN RULES

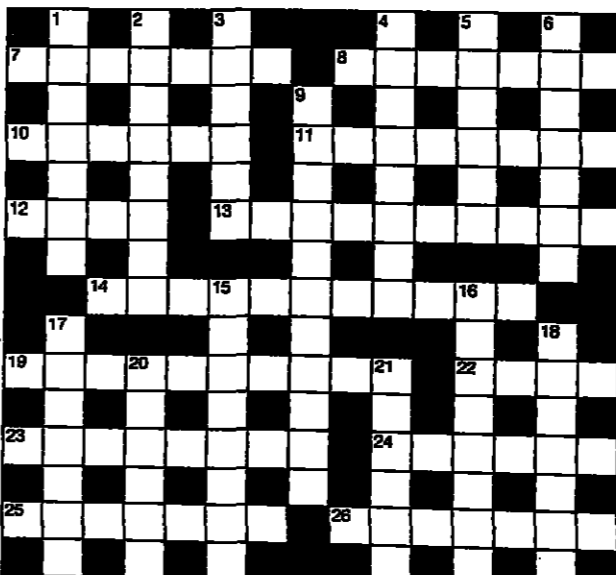


Professional sportsmen are used to only one mode of discourse following a match, and that is self-justification. They are encouraged to talk us through the incident as they saw it. As a result, sorry really does become the hardest word. David Runciman

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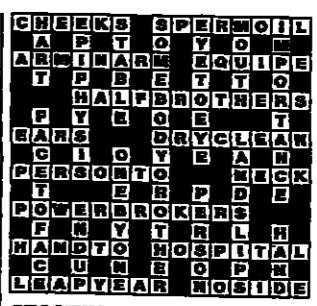
Guardian Crossword No 20,786

Set by Rufus



- Across
7 Sharp bet using inside information (7)
8 Popped the question after work, but not accepted (7)
10 Arrests sailor starting scraps (8)
11 Not utilised, like a neglected barometer? (8)
12 Honest expression of agreement (4)
13 Sign to put one on the right road? (2,4,4)
14 Purposeful glance at a dictionary? (7,4)
19 We are shortly to join football team of legendary reputation (10)
22 A school which sets the tone (4)
23 Chinese take-away? (8)
24 Artist given food — a bit of salad (8)

- Down
25 Where to obtain a degree in common talk (7)
26 Booked as promised (7)
1 Brown paper set on fire (7)
2 In time a possible giver of pain (8)
3 Unions strangely in agreement (6)
4 Files put in the wrong order with malicious intent (6)
5 Clean up on the favourite, darling! (6)
6 They enter the atmosphere from a remote point (7)
9 Invald on divan, dull in disposition (4,3,4)
15 The Pony Express's first new recruit (8)
16 Inflate an account maybe — or unduly reduce one (8)
17 Communist leader is a flaming capitalist (7)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,786

- 18 From which to make the draw (7)
20 Herringway and Sterne novel (6)
21 Several horses right to take for a ride outside (6)

Solution tomorrow

22 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 328 228. Calls cost 50p per minute Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm, and 45p per minute at all other times. Service supplied by ATS.



Handwritten signature or note at the bottom of the page.